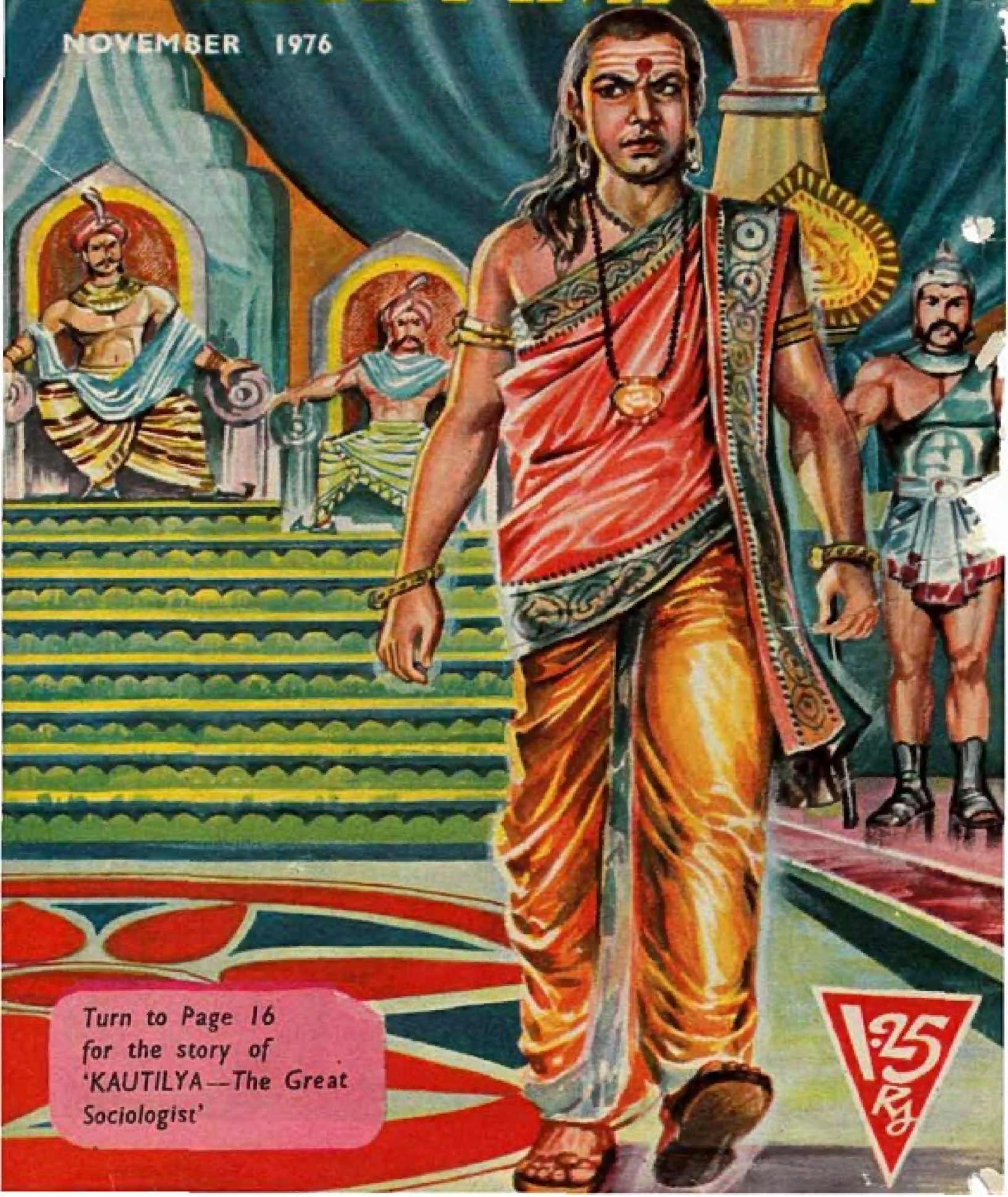


CHANDAMAMA

NOVEMBER 1976



Turn to Page 16
for the story of
'KAUTILYA—The Great
Sociologist'



WHAT A SURPRISE?

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HE'S
SEEING
MY
REPORT
CARD...



WHEN
HE'S
HAPPY...



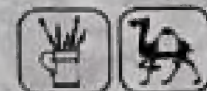
WHEN
I BREAK A
WINDOW
PANE...



WHEN I
FRIGHTEN
HIM WITH
A MASK
OVER
MY FACE...

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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 7

NOVEMBER 1976

No. 5

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

A WORD ABOUT YOUR MAGAZINE

As our numerous readers tell us from time to time—the **Chandamama**, faithful to its name, brings them handfuls of moonlight month after month. Some of them even add with enthusiasm, "So much sweet stuff for just a rupee!"

To hear these comments have been our joy—the joy that has sustained the **Chandamama** for all these years. While these have been the years during which you have found your pocket-money bringing you less of your favourite toffee and lollipop than it could bring earlier, your parents have bought you a story book or a pair of shorts paying more (and that is not simply because you are reading thicker books or wearing a bit longer shorts now) than they have paid earlier, the **Chandamama** has been too stubborn to change its price label. And this is what you should really call stubbornness, for, around it, there is hardly a magazine or newspaper which has not revised its price upwardly during the last six years.

But, as you know, in a society things are related to each other. If several things upon which the magazine depends cost more, the magazine is bound to feel the impact. The **Chandamama** is proud to have withstood the impact as long as it could. Even now it does not yield; but it has to readjust its position keeping in view the changing circumstances. Hence the reluctant increase in its price by twentyfive paise. We know, you, dear readers, will understand and appreciate the situation. The **Chandamama**, in its turn, will manage to give you more features and even more pages—that means more of moonlight and moon-delight!

IN THIS ISSUE

- * A SIGNIFICANT LEGEND—Miracles at Chandanpur
 - * INDIA'S FIRST FAMOUS SOCIOLOGIST—Kautilya
 - * ILLUSTRATED EPISODE OF RANI DURGAVATI
 - * THE VAMPIRE'S RIDDLE, A MAGIC STORY AND THE STORY OF A PHRASE
- PLUS 7 COMPLETE STORIES
AND OTHER REGULAR FEATURES

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. M. Natarajan



Mr. Madangopal

- * These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- * Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 30th **NOVEMBER**.
- * Winning captions will be announced in **JANUARY 77** Issue.
- * Write your entry on a **POST CARD**, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to : **PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST, CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE, MADRAS - 600 026**

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in September Issue

The prize is awarded to: Miss Chitra Iyer,
47 Bhagwat Bhuvan, Hall Road, Kurla, Bombay-70

Winning Entry - 'A Face so Dear' - 'The Face of A Deer'

NEWS FOR YOU....

Night in Day!

In broad daylight you can step into an area of night. It is not night simply because it is dark. You meet there all such creatures who are normally active only after the nightfall.

This exciting news comes from the Berlin Zoo. In its newly opened section known as the Nocturnal Animals' House, day is literally turned into night and you can see there an assortment of the world's least seen creatures. Among them are desert foxes, springing mice, jerboas of North Africa, South African jumping hares, Madagascar mice, Tasmanian wombats, Kangaroo rats, spin ant-eaters from Australia, African genet cats, flying foxes from Egypt, and Canadian skunks.

Birth of a new Psychology!

There are many psychologies — industrial, social, educational, abnormal, so on and so forth. In Berlin was held a conference of psychologists which, it is claimed, heralds "the birth of food psychology". The psychologists who ate normally during the conference discussed about normal as well as abnormal food habits of people. For the time being they agreed to disagree on all points except one on which all agreed. That one is, those who are overweight find eating a comforting and relaxing activity. They react to the stress and strain of daily life with ever more voracious appetite!

....AND SOME VIEWS TOO

A Guide to 20th Century Thoughts on War.

The next World War will be fought with stones.

—Albert Einstein

I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

War as a part of a whole, and that whole—politics.

—V. I. Lenin

War cannot be divorced from politics for a single moment.

—Mao Tse-Tung

The human race has today the means for annihilating itself — either in a fit of complete lunacy, i. e., in a big war by a brief fit of destruction or by careless handling of atomic technology, through a slow process of poisoning and of deterioration in its genetic structure.

—Max Born

In war, Resolution, in defeat, Defiance, in victory, Magnanimity

—Winston Churchill.



TEN YEARS AFTER!

The small kingdom of Rudra-verma, ringed by mountains, faced a great crisis. The monsoon was good and the crop was fine. But just before the peasants took the produce home, swarms of locusts invaded the fields and consumed the entire crop. This happened for two consecutive years. As a result the land was threatened by a severe famine. The king sent his army to fight the menace of the locusts. The soldiers dashed into the swarms with long sticks and swords. They also tried to scare the locusts away with burning torches. But all such efforts were found to be futile. Even some soldiers were devoured by the

locusts.

King Rudra-verma announced that he who can rid the land of the locusts will receive gold to the measure of his weight.

Days passed. But nobody came forward to claim the reward. At last his spies told the king that an acre of land situated in a remote nook of the kingdom had been spared by the locusts during both their invasions. Perhaps the owner of the land, an old farmer, knew some magic to drive away the locusts.

The king summoned the old man and wanted to know how he saved his crop from the locusts.

"My lord! I know how to

drive them away," answered the man.

"Then you must teach the secret to all the people of my kingdom. You must have heard of the reward I have announced. That will go to you if you succeed in the mission," said the king.

"In order to teach the secret to all the people, I must undertake a tour of the entire country. My sons have to tour too, because alone I cannot cover all the villages. This will mean, my own acre of land will go untillied," murmured the old man.

"What does that matter if you are going to receive gold amounting to your own weight?" observed the king.

The old man and his sons toured the length and breadth of the land, teaching the people how to produce noise in a particular rhythm which scared the locusts. Besides, they taught the farmers how to mix a few herbs and prepare a paste. Pieces of cloths with dabs of that paste were to be placed on sticks which were to be planted amidst the fields. They exuded a peculiar smell which was shunned by the locusts.

The locusts came like the previous years, but were scared by the noise and the smell and flew away. The harvest all over the land was excellent. Only the old man's acre of land lay bar-



ren as he had no time to till it.

After the locusts were gone, the old man came to the king and asked for the reward. The king had much gold with him. But he was in no mood to part with a portion of it as he had failed to realise taxes from his subjects for two years.

"Don't you worry. I will ask the people to contribute their mite and that should make a handsome reward for you," said the king.

But the response to the king's appeal for subscription was poor, for the loss of crop for two years had reduced the people to poverty.

The king called the old man and handed over to him the small fund he had been able to raise, saying, "You have to remain content with this much, I'm afraid!"

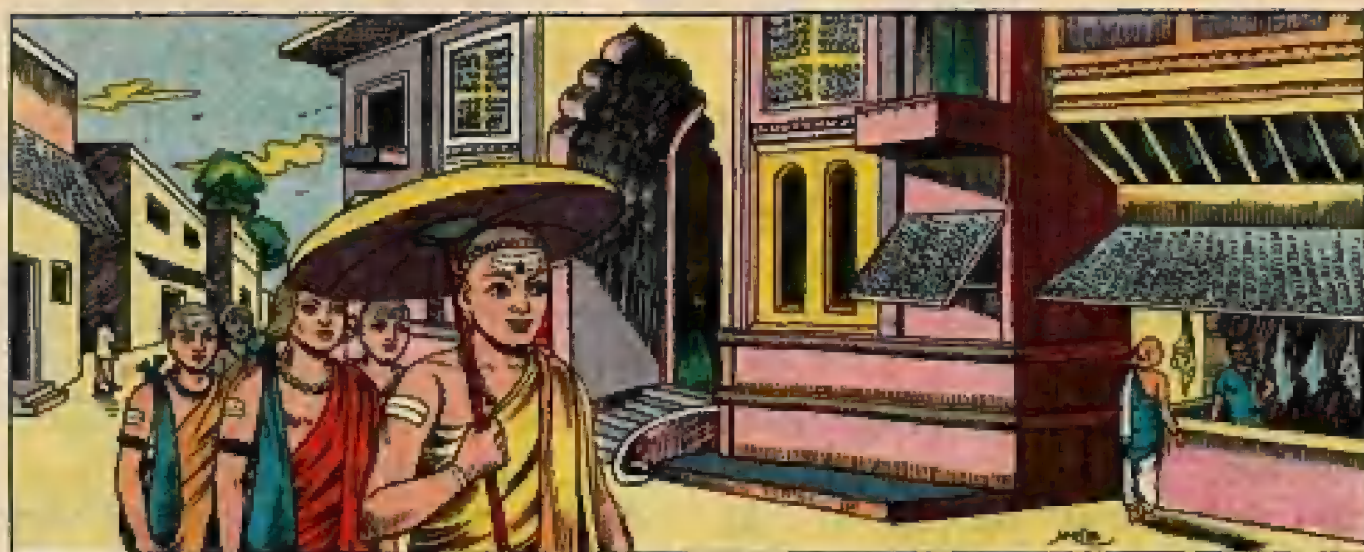
The old man grumbled. At that shouted the king, "What is the proof that the locusts left our land because of your devices? Who knows if they did not leave of their own? Begone!"

The old man left the court quietly.

The locusts were not seen for ten years. Then, before a harvest, they suddenly loomed in the horizon like clouds and swooped down upon the crops. By then the people had forgotten the rhythm of the sound as well as the mixture of herbs the old farmer had taught them.

The king's messengers ran to summon the old farmer. But they returned and reported that the old man and his family had left the kingdom since ten years. Their hut lay in ruins.





LEGENDS OF INDIA

MIRACLES AT CHANDANPUR

There was a spiritual master who attracted a large number of devotees. When he died his devotees did not wish his cult to come to an end. There was a young scholar who served the master and who was considered very wise. The devotees made him the new master and showed him all the reverence which they used to show to the departed master.

The young guru, by virtue of his learning, impressed the devotees even more than his master. Once every year he roamed about places, visiting the houses of the devotees, blessing them and receiving enthusiastic ovations from them.

In a small village named Chandanpur lived Ramdas, a

poor farmer, who was a disciple of the guru. The date of the guru's arrival in his village had been announced and Ramdas was in ecstasy. From the morning till late in the night he was busy erecting the rostrum on which the guru was to sit and deliver discourses. When that was done, he was running about arranging for large quantities of flowers for the guru. Not that other villagers were not working for the reception. But Ramdas was excitement and joy personified.

His son was sick. From hour to hour news about the son's condition reached him—and they were hardly good news. But he had no time to spare for the son. "Nothing is more im-

portant than the guru's visit. God will cure my son, since I am busy for the guru," he said to every messenger who came with appeals from his wife or mother for him to hasten to home.

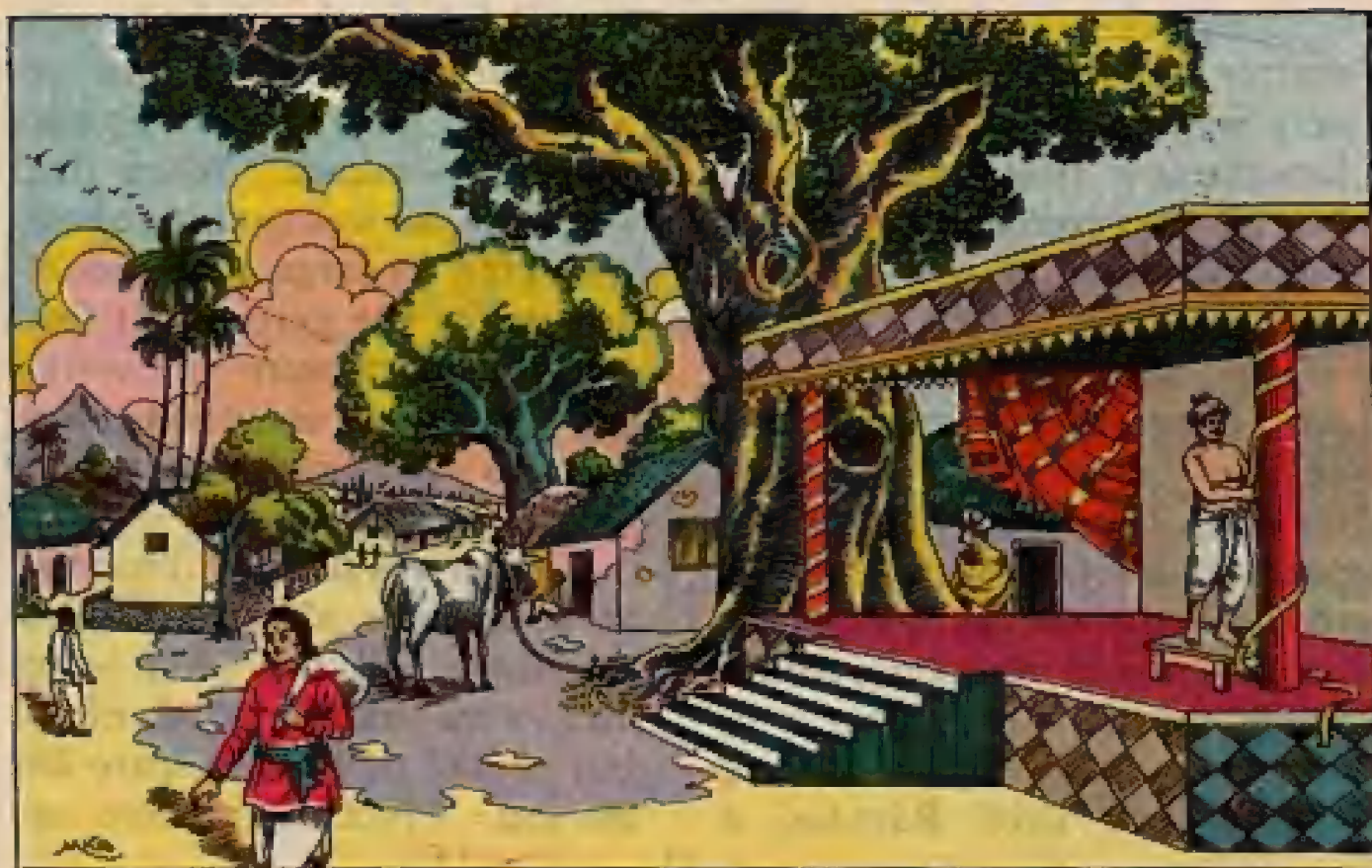
At last the young guru arrived. He was received by the influential people of the village and he never knew all that Ramdas had done for his visit. But while all were busy welcoming the guru, an old lady came running to Ramdas and informed him that his son was dead!

"Never mind," said Ramdas smiling, "Here is my guru,

the living God. His grace can instantly remove my sorrow."

Ramdas brought some water in a vessel and bowed down to the guru and prayed him to dip his foot in it. The guru, although he did not know what was in Ramdas's mind, obliged him. In the meanwhile Ramdas's relatives had carried the deadbody of his son to the spot. Chanting the guru's name loudly, Ramdas sprinkled the water on the deadbody and called him by his name.

The crowd watched the scene in silence. Many took Ramdas to be a madcap. But to everybody's great surprise Ramdas's

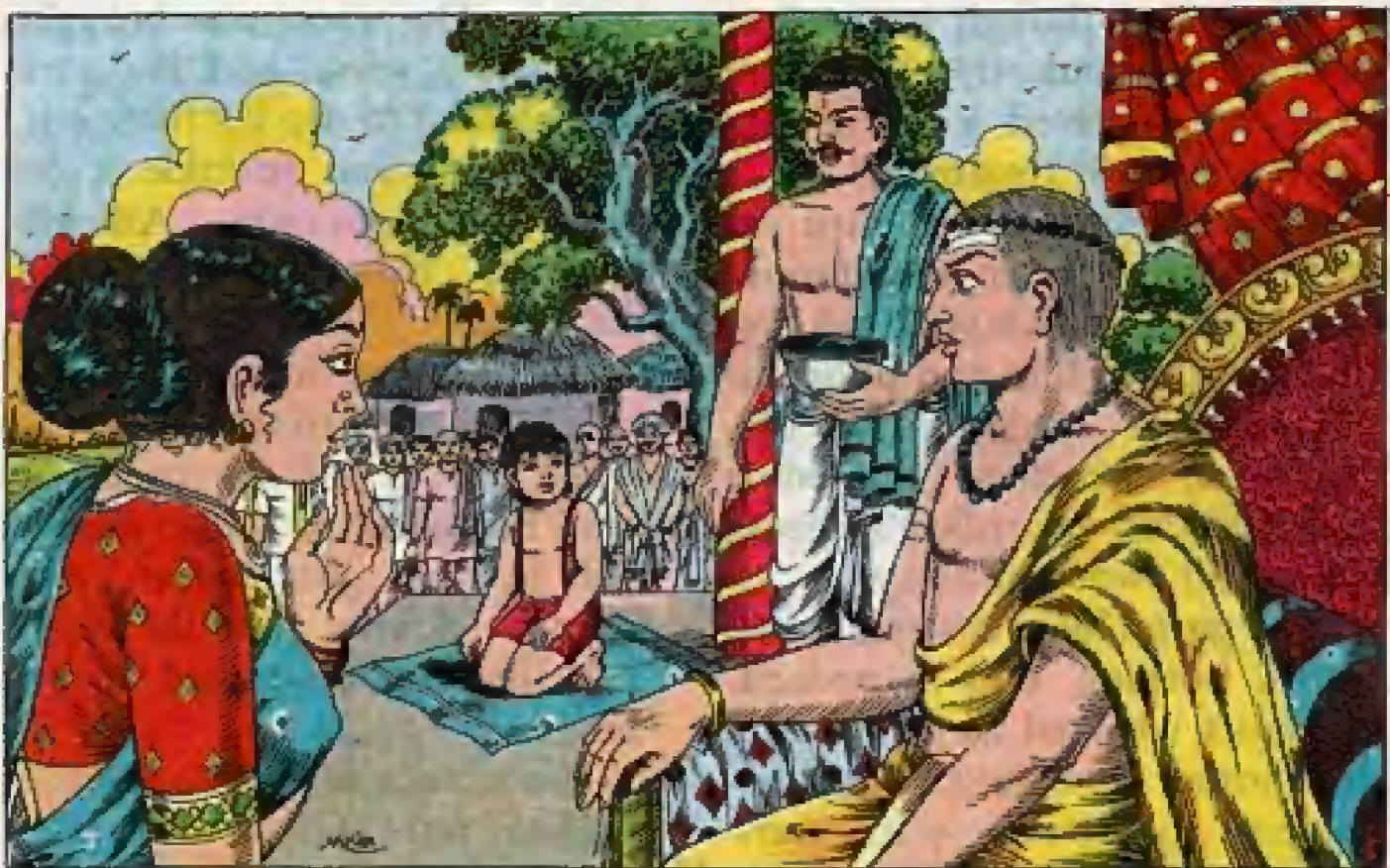


son opened his eyes and soon sat up by himself, as if woken up from a sound sleep. The only man who did not seem surprised at all was Ramdas. "This was bound to happen," he exclaimed, "Is there any crisis which cannot be overcome by the guru's grace?"

While Ramdas was the one to be the least surprised, the guru was the one to be most surprised. "How is it that I never knew I had so much power!" he wondered silently. Outwardly he showed as if he had performed the miracle knowingly, out of his pity for the poor disciple!

The news of the miracle spread like wild fire. Hundreds of people rushed to the guru and became his disciples. Soon the rich landlord of the area heard of the guru. He personally came to invite the guru to be his guest. The guru gladly accepted the invitation.

At the landlord's house the guru was given a king's reception. A dozen servants were at his beck and call. Every day he was offered a set of new silk dress. The landlord and his family prostrated to him once in the morning and again at night. The service of a cook who was once employed in the





king's kitchen was secured by the landlord to cook for the guru.

The guru, though amazed at his own popularity, was sure that he deserved nothing less than this royal treatment!

One day, while the guru sat before the deity in meditation, the landlord's five year old son toddled up to him and pulled at his garland. Angry at this disturbance, the guru planted a hard slap on the infant's cheek. The child swooned away.

The guru closed his eyes again as if nothing had happened. Servants whisked away the boy to another apartment. A prominent physician was sum-

moned immediately. But he came there only to announce that the boy was dead.

The landlord's wife and other women began wailing. But the landlord himself consoled them, reminding them of the guru's miraculous powers. All waited patiently till the guru opened his eyes. The landlord then placed his son's deadbody before him and said in an appealing tone, "Kindly pardon this little sinner, O great soul, and give him back his life!"

A big crowd soon gathered there to see yet another miracle. The guru cast a proud glance at them and smiled and ordered the landlord to fetch a little water. The water was brought in a silver vessel and the guru was pleased to dip his foot in it.

"Take it and sprinkle it on your audacious son. All will be well. Now, begone!" said the guru.

But all was not well. The water was used to the last drop. When there was no result, a fresh bucketful of water, sanctified by the guru's feet, was literally poured on the boy. Yet the boy continued to lie dead!

The women who had stopped wailing now burst into loud

cries. The landlord's eyes became rounder and redder. He advanced at the guru and blurted out, "Give the boy back his life or get ready to lose your own!"

The guru was at his wit's end. He tried to quote scriptures in a bid to explain away the child's death. But he left the quotation at the middle when his eyes fell on the landlord's fists which were getting clenched.

One of the guru's disciples had in the meanwhile run to the other end of the village to inform Ramdas of the unexpected development. Ramdas appeared on the scene just when the landlord's wrath was going to find a violent expression.

"O Guru! Have pity on us and revive the boy!" Ramdas uttered and touched the guru's

feet with his fingers which were smeared with his own tears and then moved his hands on the deadbody. The boy opened his eyes. His mother instantly took him in her embrace.

"It was a mere play of the guru," said Ramdas looking at the people who were bewildered.

The guru left the place the same day. He expressed his gratitude to Ramdas. But Ramdas would only say, "Why are you making fun of this poor slave of yours, O Master? Is it not all your play?"

But the guru understood it too well that the miracles were the outcome of Ramdas's faith and devotion. Before the deity, the guru wept and said, "All know that Ramdas is my disciple. But O lord, I know that you meant him to teach me a primary lesson in humility!"



KAUTILYA - The Great Sociologist

Two men, coming from opposite directions, met inside a forest at the foot of the Vindhya mountains. One was a young Kshatriya, the other an elderly Brahmin. One was an officer in the army of Alexander the Great who had conquered parts of India. But brave and audacious that he was, he had defied Alexander to his face. The furious Greek hero ordered him to be put to death. But the young officer escaped in time.

The other one, the Brahmin, had been humiliated by the Nanda King of Pataliputra and was out in search of a way to take his revenge.

The young man was Chandragupta and the elderly Brahmin was Kautilya who was also known as Chanakya or Vishnugupta. As the legend goes, Chandragupta was surprised to see the Brahmin pouring a jarful of sweet liquid at the roots of a thorny bush. On inquiry, he understood that the Brahmin's foot had been pricked by a thorn from the bush and hence he was out to destroy the bush. The sweet liquid would soon attract numerous ants to the

roots of the bush. They would consume the roots and the bush would die!

Chandragupta, says the legend, was amazed at the adamant nature of the Brahmin. By and by he also realised that the Brahmin was a great scholar from Taxila. Chandragupta, whose family had much grievance against the Nanda dynasty, was happy to learn that Kautilya was determined to punish the king. Kautilya too was happy to find in Chandragupta an intelligent Kshatriya lad who would help him achieve his goal. Both became friends and Kautilya took a vow to dethrone the Nanda king and pass on the crown to Chandragupta.

And in course of a few years Kautilya succeeded in fulfilling his vow. Chandragupta was able to raise an army and defeat the Nanda King, putting an end to the old line of rulers of Magadha. The new dynasty founded by Chandragupta is famous in history as the Maurya dynasty.

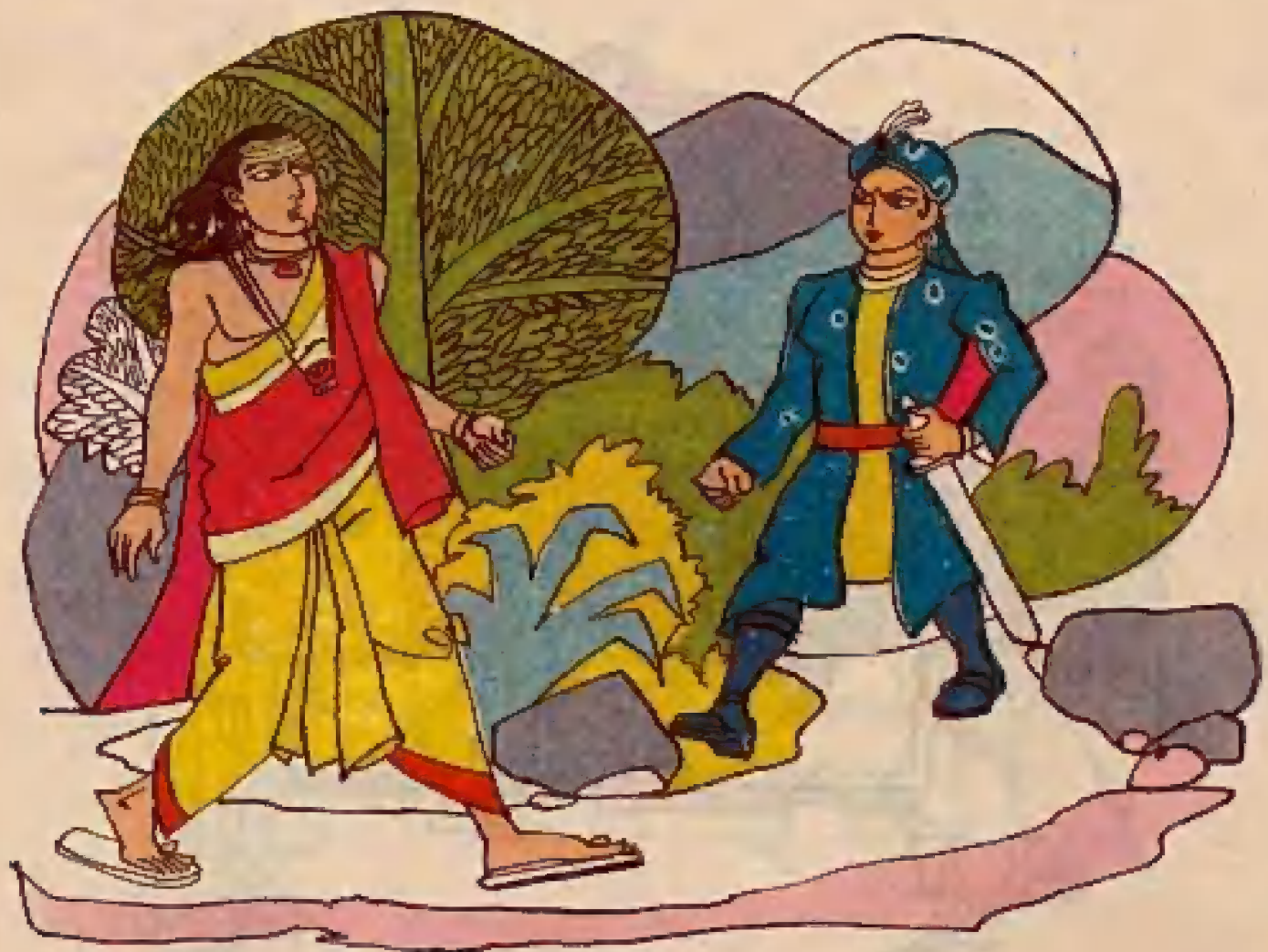
Chandragupta retained Kautilya as his prime minister.

Kautilya zealously guarded the interests of Chandragupta and protected him from several dangers.

In his later years Kautilya compiled the theories and practices of administration, trade, laws etc. prevailing in the country into a volume known as the *Arthasastram*. Although the version of the *Arthasastram* we read today was discovered only in the early years of this century, there were other versions which circulated among the rulers and

administrators of the country for centuries.

How should a king behave towards the princes? What punishment should be given to a criminal, a cheat or a dishonest trader? What should be the attitude of a king towards his neighbouring kings? A number of such questions have been discussed by the author. Sometimes he has only recorded the traditions, sometimes he has given his own views. To a modern reader many of the



advices he has given to the rulers on punishing the guilty or on gaining advantage over their enemies would seem barbaric. But the book also enlightens us about the duties and obligations to which the kings and the commoners were bound in a remote past. For example, says the book, a king must protect his subjects from eight calamities: fire, flood, epidemic, famine, rodents destroying the crops, hordes of wild elephants and such other beasts, serpents and

evil spirits, apart from protecting them from invaders and bandits.

The *Arthasastram*, written about 2,300 years ago and comprised of 6,000 *slokas*, is perhaps the world's first complete work of its nature. Kautilya, according to the popular notion, means one who was remarkable for his diplomatic character. But some scholars are of the opinion that this was the author's surname, indicating his descent from a rishi of the same name.

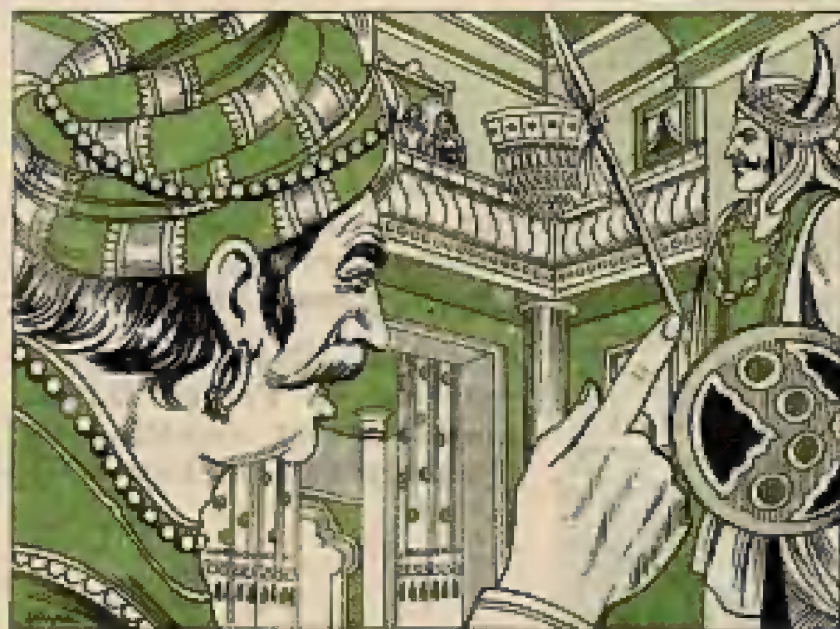




RANI DURGAVATI

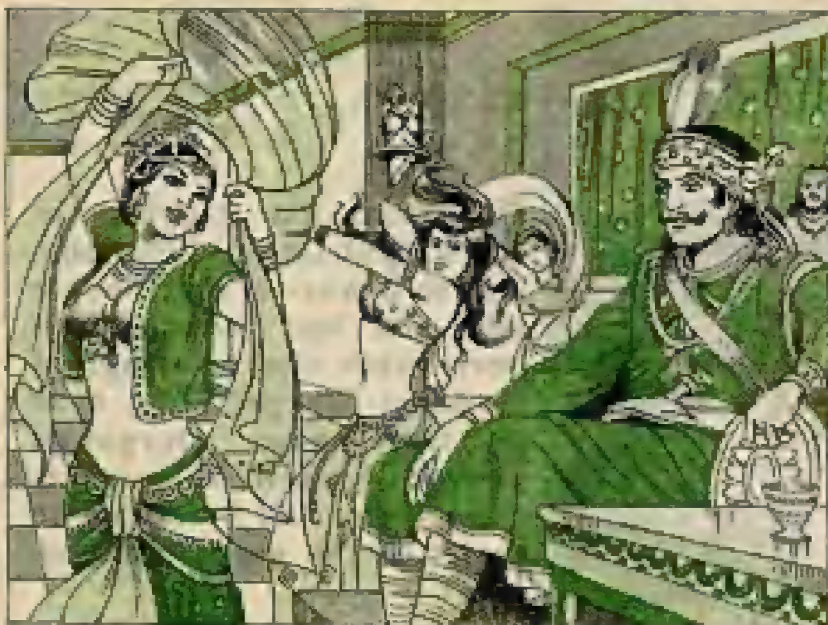
Durgavati, the daughter of the Rajput Chief of Mahoba, was so beautiful that people said she had indeed been born with the blessings of Goddess Durga! And, true to her name, Durgavati proved herself vallant, as though she had in her some traits of the great goddess.

One evening, while Princess Durgavati had climbed a hillock, she saw some pilgrims attacked by a gang of robbers. Before she had gone to the pilgrims' rescue, a young man riding a horse appeared there and routed the robbers.



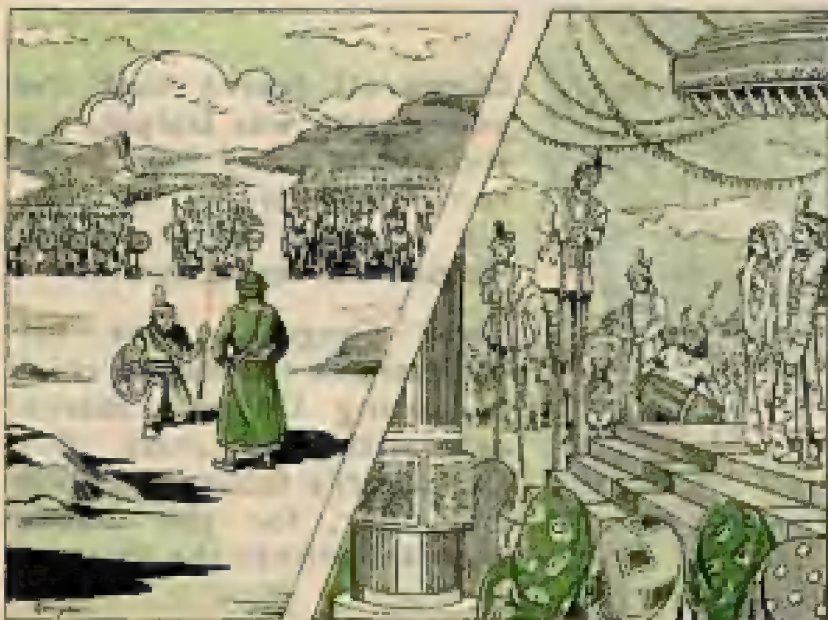
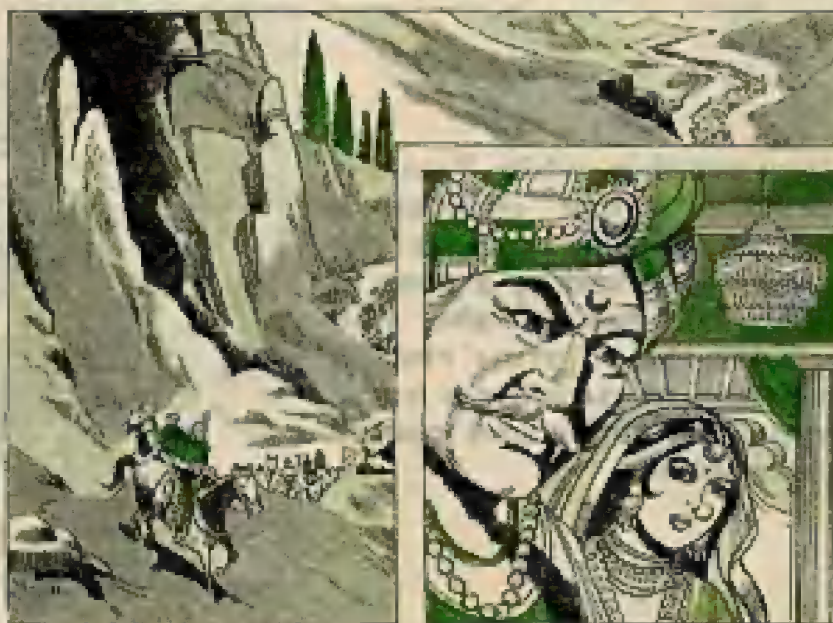
Durgavati learnt that the young man was Dalpat, the son of the Gond Raja Sangram Shah of Garha. For his courage and virtues Dalpat was loved by all.

Soon Sangram sent his emissary to the Rajput chief proposing Dalpat's marriage with Durgavati. But Durgavati's father declined the offer, for the Gonds were inferior to the Rajputs.



Durgavati's father had his eyes on some youths of high families. But Durgavati knew that Dalpat was far more superior to them. She sent a few dancing girls to Dalpat who, while singing, passed on the message that Dalpat must exercise courage in order to win Durgavati's hand.

Prince Dalpat got the hint. He advanced into Mahoba with his army. As the news reached the Rajput chief, Durgavati pleaded with her father to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. "Caste is not greater than character," she said.



Durgavati's father, knowing his daughter's mind, went out to meet Dalpat alone. Dalpat greeted him by kneeling down before him.

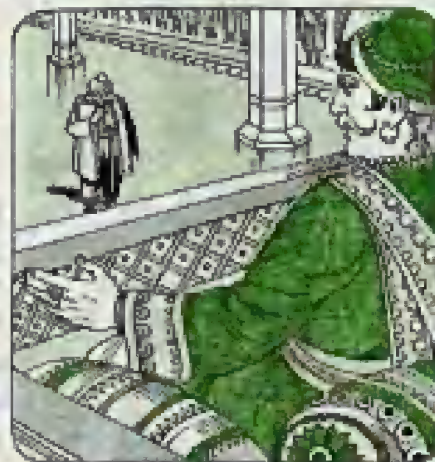
Princess Durgavati was married to Prince Dalpat amidst great rejoicing by the people of the two territories.

But Durgavati's happiness was short-lived. Dalpat, the young king, died only four years after their marriage, leaving an infant son, Vir Narayan, in charge of Durgavati.



Though great was her grief, Durgavati did not neglect her royal duties. She ruled with great prudence and compassion, herself going out and solving the people's problems. Garha became famous as a prosperous and peaceful kingdom.

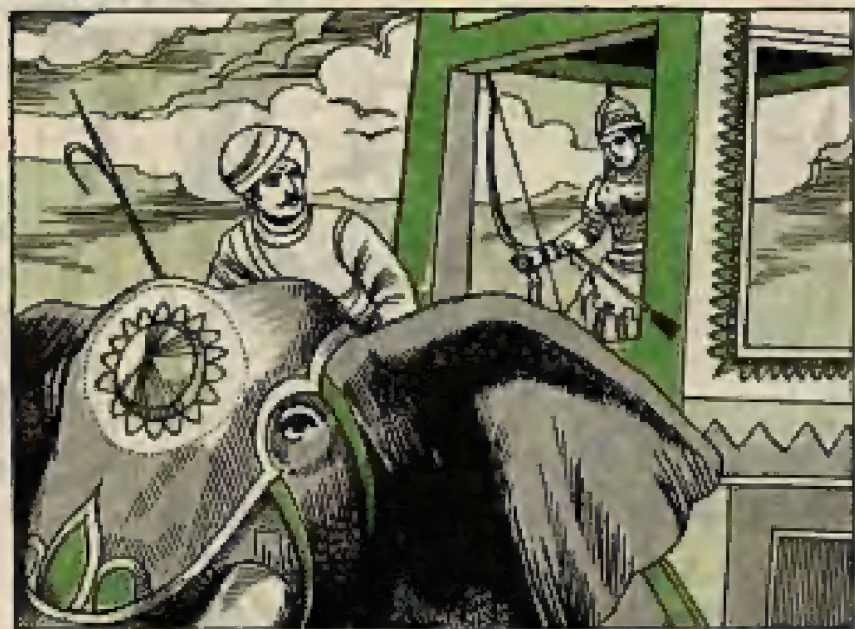
That was the time of Emperor Akbar. Remarkable though for many qualities, he was ever eager to expand his empire. His officers were jealous of Garha's independence and Rani Durgavati's popularity. Akbar ordered Asaf Khan to conquer Garha, which had never been conquered before.





Akbar and Asaf Khan were sure that the Rani will be panic-struck and will surrender without a battle. But she pooh-poohed the enemy's invitation to accept Akbar as her emperor. She led a valiant Gond army herself to face the invaders.

Asaf Khan, at one stage, lost his nerve before the brave defence put forth by the Rani. He hired an ordinary man to shoot an arrow at the Rani from a hiding. The Rani was wounded.



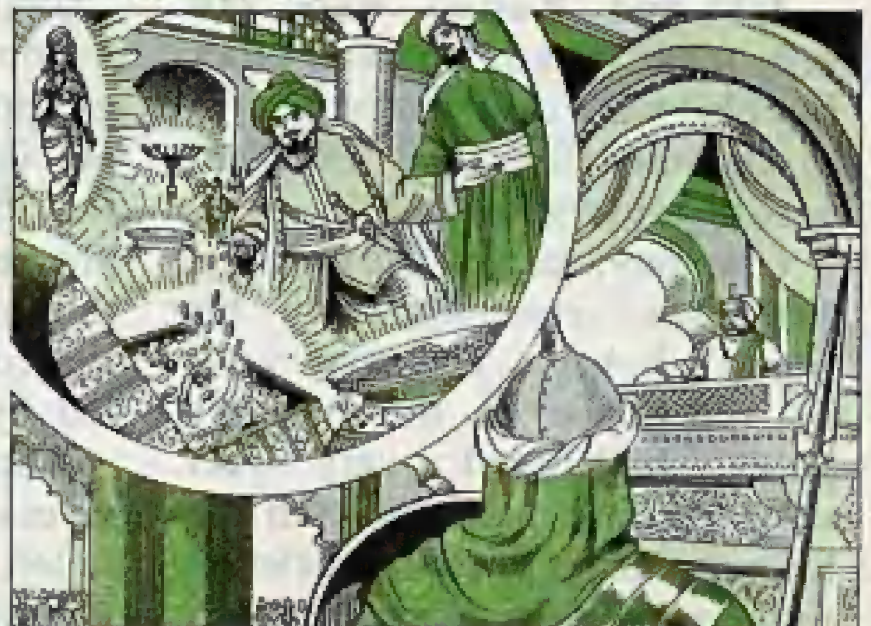
The Rani ordered for a strategic retreat, to return again. But the river she was to cross had suddenly been in spate. She would not cross the river to safety until all her soldiers had crossed.

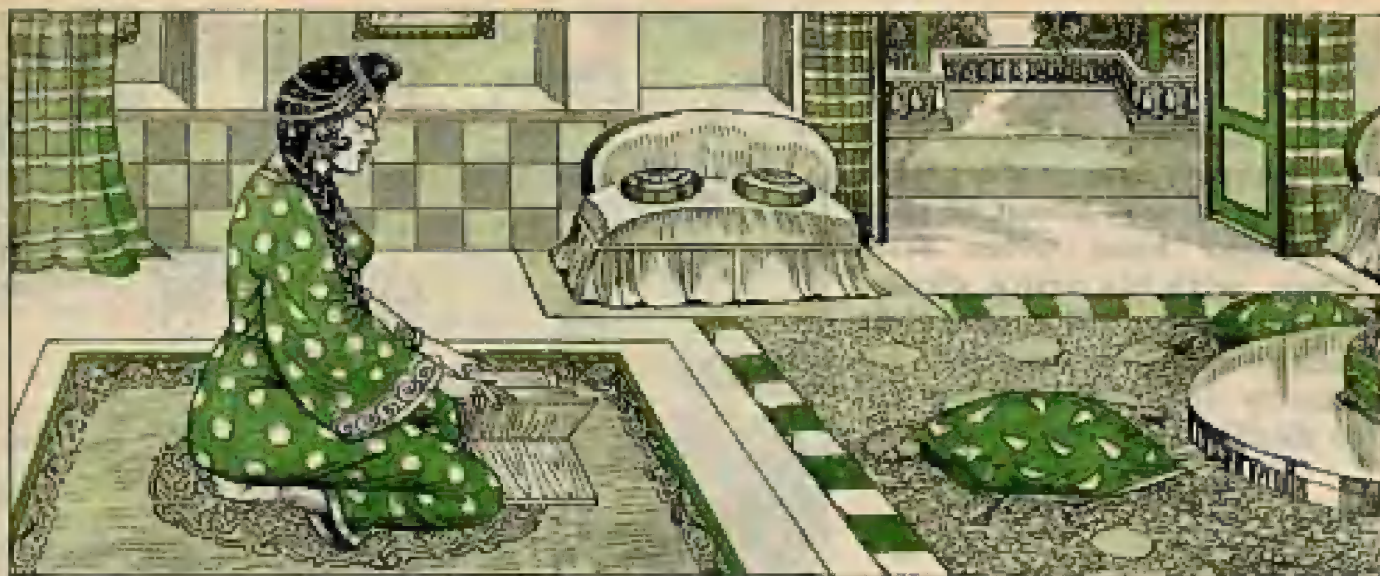
After she was satisfied that her army was safe, Rani Durgavati was about to step into her boat when Asaf Khan, with his army, closed in upon her. She saw that escape was impossible. Instantly she stabbed herself to death.



But even then Asaf Khan did not win an easy victory. Rani Durgavati's heroic young son, Vir Narayan, defended the fort. After two months of battle, Vir Narayan was killed and Asaf Khan entered the fort.

The fort of Garha abounded in wealth. Asaf Khan looted them all. The greater part of the loot never reached Akbar. And Akbar received no praise either for this mean attack on an innocent kingdom and a brave queen. All glory went to Rani Durgavati.





THE NOBLE LIARS

This happened during the time of Nawab Wajij Ali Shah of Lucknow. Jalil and Rashid were two young friends, extremely fond of each other. Jalil was the son of the leading merchant of the city while Rashid was a promising poet.

Jalil and Rashid were not only ideal friends to each other but also were dear to the people of the city for their excellent nature and behaviour.

One day, late in the evening, Jalil was returning from his friend's house. The road went by the house of the nawab's vizier. Jalil heard a very sweet voice reciting passages from the Koran. He stopped and listened to the voice with great attention.

He was so much charmed by the recitation that he hardly knew when he climbed a tree and peeped into the room on the upper floor of the vizier's house. There sat the vizier's daughter, Sabna, reading the holy book.

Jalil stole in and sat on the window. While reading, the girl pronounced a word wrongly. He immediately corrected her. But the girl was so deeply engrossed in the book that she took no notice of him, although she corrected herself as prompted by Jalil.

Thereafter Jalil corrected her several times and yet the girl failed to notice him. When she was about to finish her reading,

Jalil climbed down and went home.

The recitation charmed Jalil again in the next evening and he climbed into the cabin. He continued to do the same during the subsequent evenings too.

One evening, while Jalil was climbing the tree, he was seen by the vizier. The vizier became terribly angry. But he was a man of patience. He waited to see what would happen next.

But what he saw surprised him. Jalil sat quietly near the window and only corrected Sabna from time to time. The vizier could very well understand that his daughter was not

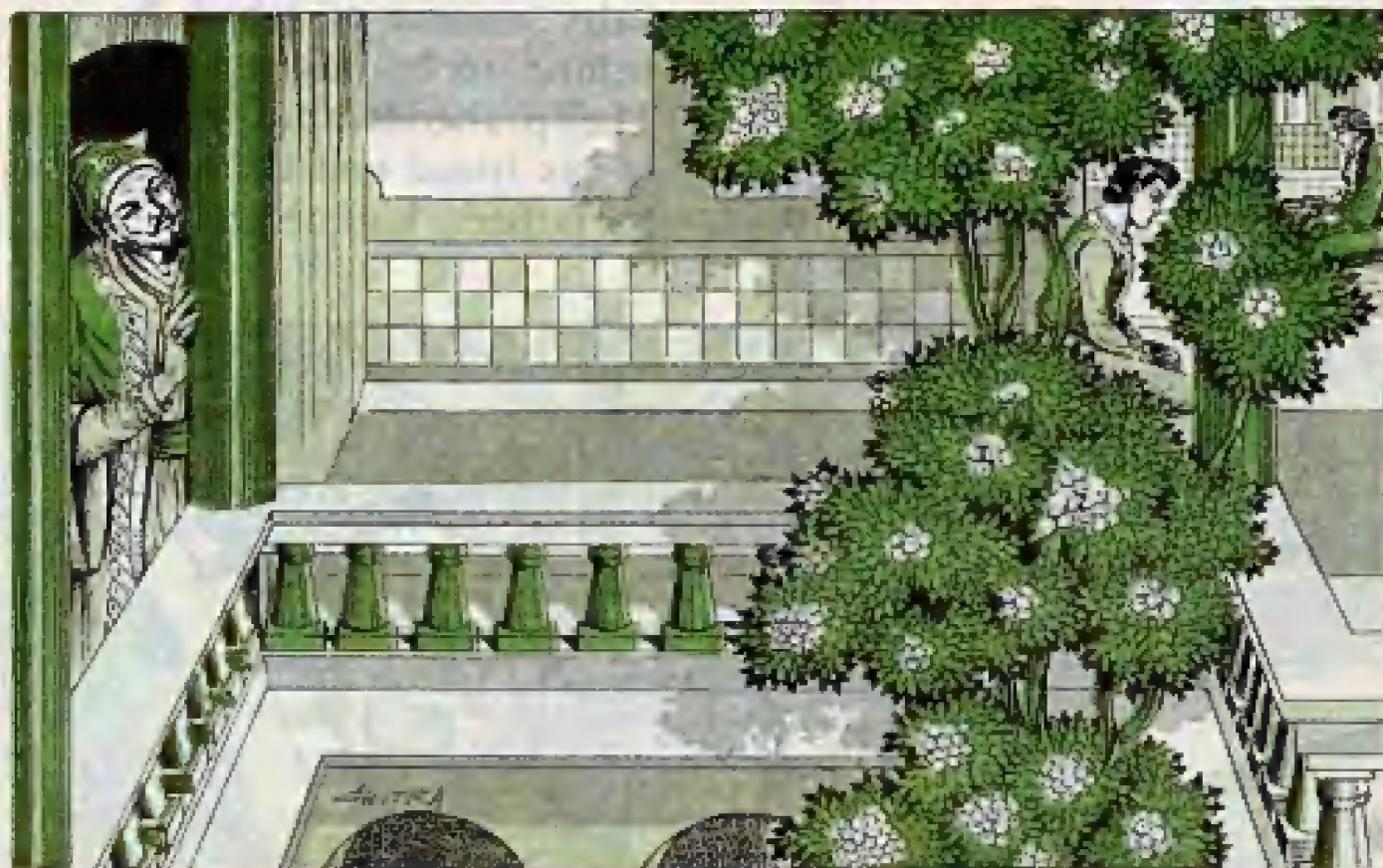
at all conscious of the young man's presence.

The vizier observed Jalil repeating the act during the evenings that followed. He did not know what to do about it. At last he reported the queer happening to his master, the nawab.

The nawab too was surprised. But, after a moment's reflection, he whispered his idea to the vizier and both smiled.

The next night, while Jalil was climbing down, he fell into the hands of two police officers.

"What were you doing?" they demanded to know.



Jalil was in a dilemma. If he spoke the truth, nobody would believe him. It will be taken that he secretly visited Sabna, with her knowledge. There was bound to be a scandal involving the innocent girl. After a little hesitation, Jalil said that he was trying to steal from the vizier's house.

"You seem to be hailing from a good family. If someone stands security for you, we can let you on bail for the night," said the officers.

Jalil called his friend Rashid and told him everything. Rashid stood security for him.

But, in the morning, when the officers came to take Jalil to the nawab's court, Rashid stepped forward and declared, "I'm the young man whom you caught yesterday!"

"How is that, my friend? Was

it not I whom they caught?" protested Jalil.

The bewildered officers produced both the young men before the nawab. There also each one claimed himself to be the thief declaring the other one as innocent. The courtiers looked quite intrigued.

"Well, well, noble liars, I will punish both of you," announced the nawab, "Jalil, under my order, must marry Sabna. And Rashid is appointed as my court poet."

The nawab then told the courtiers the mystery of Jalil's visits to Sabna's room. All were greatly amused. They praised Jalil for his high sense of chivalry because of which he was willing to be taken as a thief. They praised Rashid for his love of his friend and the nawab for his fatherly kindness.





*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

THE RISE AND FALL OF A KINGDOM

Braving the rain and the sharp cool breeze, King Vikram returned to the tree. He climbed it and brought down the corpse again and resumed his journey through the deserted cremation ground. He was greeted by eerie laughter and weird shrieks from all around. Horrible faces flashed before him when streaks of lightning cut through the darkness. But he did not care and continued to advance with firm steps.

Suddenly said the vampire which possessed the corpse, "O king! I do not know whether one prospers by the blessings of gods or by one's own efforts. I do not know what you think about it. But let me tell you the story of Vijay. That should help you to find the answer to this question."

The vampire went on narrating the story:



In days gone by there was an extensive forest in this country, spread over hundreds of miles. Several tribes lived in the forest, more or less in a primitive way.

Vijay was a youth of one such tribe. He was extraordinarily intelligent and capable of influencing people. In due course he was acknowledged as the king of the tribe. He established order and discipline among his people and brought prosperity to them.

Another tribe of forest-dwellers lived adjoining the area over which Vijay ruled. They were adept in magical arts. By

their arts they had built magnificent houses and amassed much wealth. Vijay raided their land. Their magic failed before Vijay's intelligence and endeavour. They were obliged to recognise Vijay as their king.

Now, not only Vijay's domain was vaster, but also his people's prosperity was greater. Combining the magical knowledge of the conquered tribe with his own clever planning, he gave his people more and more comfort, new means of entertainment and new works. He was proud that he had done so much good for them.

But Vijay was pained at some of the old habits of the people. They continued to worship their primitive gods. Instead of thanking Vijay or their own efforts for the prosperity they had achieved, they thanked their gods.

Vijay was determined to rid his people of their superstitions. He ordered all his subjects to assemble in front of his palace on a certain day. His messengers ran across the length and breadth of his domain and announced his order. The people had come to look upon Vijay as a demigod. They started crowding before the palace right

from the dawn.

At the appointed time Vijay appeared on the terrace of his palace. The people greeted him with loud cheers. Vijay silenced them with the gesture of his hands and then addressed them in a solemn voice, "My dear people, I have a question to ask you. You are now happier than you were a few years ago. How has this change come about?"

"This is all due to the kindness of our gods!" answered the crowd.

Vijay felt much hurt. He had expected that at least some people would say, "It is due to your leadership!" But all glory went to the gods!

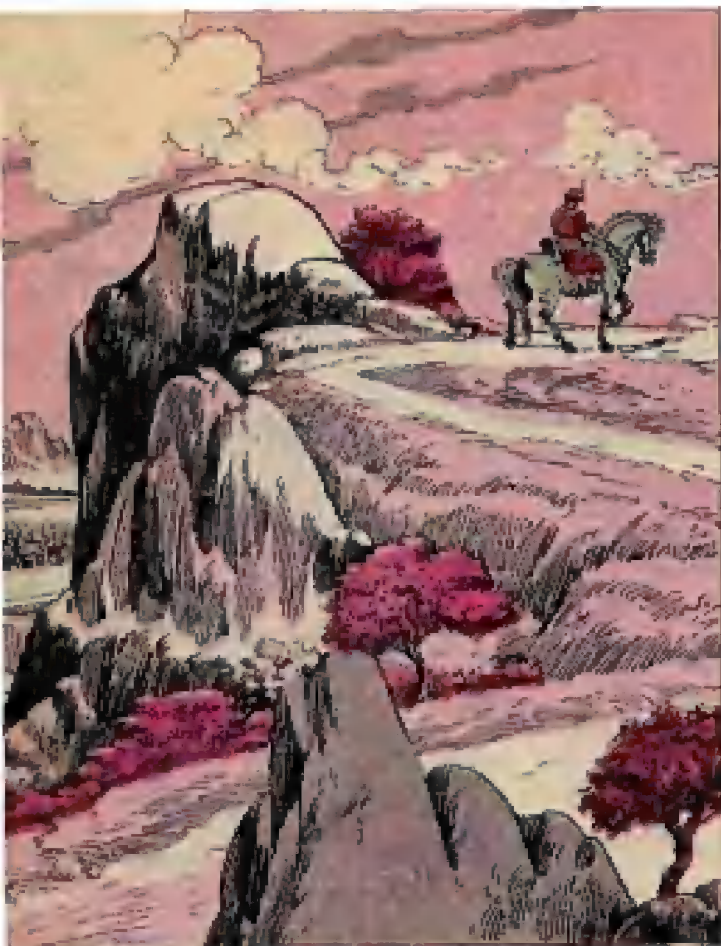
His face flushed in anger. He shouted, "How could you come to such a foolish conclusion?" But before he could say anything further, there was heard a terrific explosive sound. Clouds of dense smoke shot up from the peak of the mountain that stood behind the palace. While everybody looked at the mountain with shock and surprise, the sky turned gloomy. Then was heard a series of booming sounds. In the next moment the earth began cracking and numerous ser-



pents emerged from the wide cracks.

The people ran helter skelter in panic. Soon the buildings and trees came tumbling down. It took some time for Vijay to realise that there had been a volcanic eruption in the mountain and that had caused an earthquake.

Vijay tried to organise relief operations for his people. But a new danger followed. A powerful neighbouring king named Rawal who had heard of Vijay's new domain and its prosperity and had coveted it for long, now marched in with



a large army. Vijay summoned his people in order to resist the invasion. But his people did not respond to his summons. They had come to the conclusion that Vijay had offended the gods and had incurred their wrath. It was futile to help a cursed king!

When Vijay saw that all was lost for him, he rode away, narrowly escaping the enemy.

After several days Vijay reached a kingdom named Indrapur. It was an afternoon. Before him was a fine garden. A lover of flowers, he was about to enter the garden when

he was checked by the sentry. "Our princess is having a stroll in the garden. You cannot enter now," they said.

Vijay was extremely tired. He saw a tree in front of the gate and lay down to sleep in its shadow.

A maid of the princess happened to see the sleeping hero. She informed the princess about it. In that remote past it was rarely that one came across a traveller from a distant land. At the princess' instruction, her maids woke up Vijay and led him into the garden.

"Who are you?" asked the princess.

"I should have felt proud to introduce myself a few days ago. But now..." murmured Vijay.

The clever princess understood that Vijay was no ordinary young man. She invited him to accompany her to the palace. Vijay who was charmed by the sweet conduct of the princess, had no reason to refuse the invitation.

The king of Indrapur, who knew about the fall of Vijay's forest domain, could easily find out who his guest was. By and by Vijay told his story to the princess and the princess developed great sympathy for

him. At last she confided to her father that she had decided to marry Vijay.

The king was in a dilemma. He called a conference of his ministers and revealed before them the identity of Vijay. The princess, who was hiding in the conference hall, did not miss the comments made by the ministers.

"My lord! Rawal is desperately searching for Vijay. Rawal is a powerful king. If we surrender Vijay to him, he will be much pleased with us. We will win a great friend," said one of the ministers.

"It is a sin to betray one's guest," observed another, "All we can do is to politely ask Vijay to go away. It is not safe for us to give him shelter."

"Gentlemen! I have not yet told you what the real problem is. My daughter has decided to marry Vijay. And you all know how adamant she is!" disclosed the king.

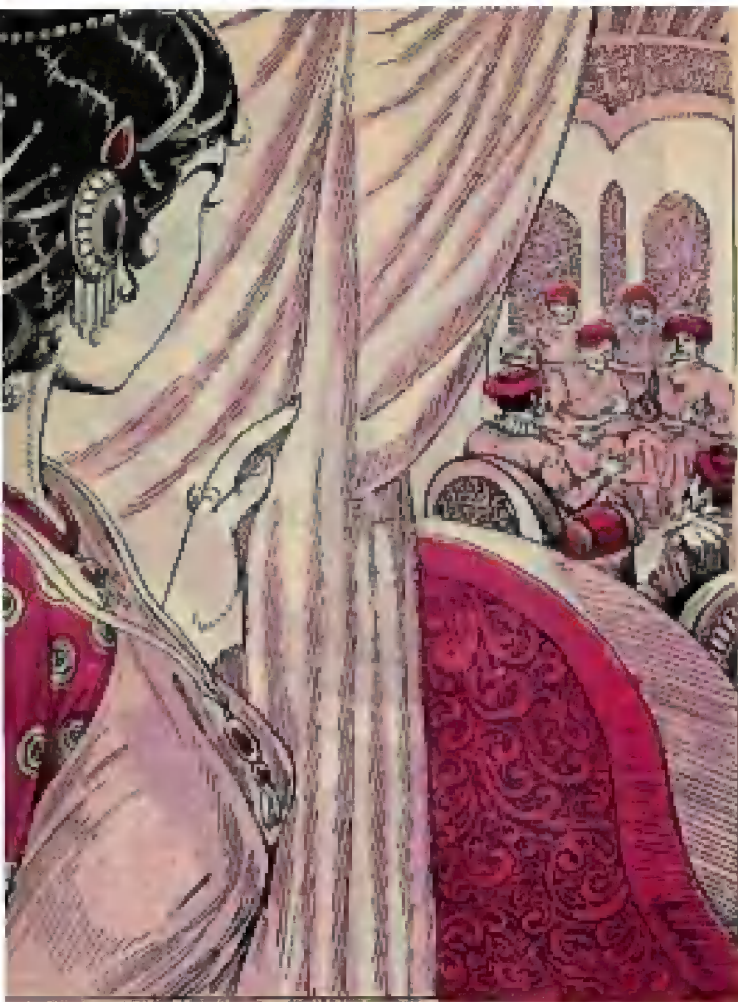
There was a silence. Then the chief minister said, "My lord! From what I have heard about Vijay, I should congratulate our sweet princess for her choice. Because Vijay has run into bad days, he has not ceased to be a great man. We can take a bold



stand against Rawal who is a terror to many other kings. He is now passing his time in merrymaking after his easy victory over Vijay's domain. This is a fine opportunity to attack Rawal's kingdom. After Rawal is defeated and Vijay's lost domain has been restored to him, we can fulfil the desire of our princess."

This proposal pleased all. The army was alerted. Vijay himself led the army against Rawal. The battle ensued. In an open duel Vijay killed Rawal.

Then, with the help of the king of Indrapur, he reorganised



his kingdom. His subjects, most of whom had left the kingdom, came back and greeted their king and pledged loyalty to him. Vijay accepted them calmly.

The marriage between Vijay and the princess of Indrapur became the most joyful event of the time. Rawal's kingdom became permanently Vijay's.

The vampire concluded the story here and asked King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, how is it that the people who had refused to fight for Vijay, returned to him again and pledged their allegiance to

him? How is it that Vijay did not take them to task for their past conduct? If you know the answers but keep quiet, your head will be shattered to pieces."

Answered King Vikram, "The people thought that Vijay was punished because he did not acknowledge his debt to the gods. When they saw that he has become victorious over a powerful king, they concluded that the gods again become kind to Vijay."

"But what is remarkable is Vijay's conduct in not taking his people to task. Vijay, who had grown proud for a while had become humble. He had realised that success depended on many factors, though one's efforts played a great part in it. The earthquake that destroyed his achievements, then his unexpected meeting with the princess, her love which altered his destiny, taught him about such factors. His pride was gone. Although his people had not changed, he had changed. Wiser that he had grown, he had no grievance against his ignorant subjects. His subjects' faith in gods was mechanical and superstitious. But the faith in God's Grace which Vijay himself had



lately developed through experiences was an enlightened faith."

As soon as the king finished his answer, the vampire gave

him the slip. Terrible was the night. But King Vikram turned towards the tree again, with a grim determination to achieve his end.

HOW THE MINISTER SAVED HIS KING I

There was a Chinese King who desired to be immortal. Physicians and magicians made good profits by offering him various elixirs of immortality.

One day a physician sent an elixir for the king which the king's minister swallowed secretly. When the king came to know about it, he ordered that the minister be hanged.

The minister calmly walked to the gallows. But when the noose would be fastened around his neck, he smiled and told the king, "Now you understand why I swallowed that elixir before it could reach your mouth, don't you?"

The king looked perplexed.

"You see, my lord," explained the minister, "One who took that elixir was destined to die, not to live forever as claimed. I thought, better I die instead of letting my king die! Thus I am about to die!"

"Pardon me, my great good minister!" exclaimed the king. Not only was the noose removed from the minister's neck, but also a diamond necklace was put around the neck!



PANDORA'S BOX

Long long ago, a god, in disguise, led a young lady through the streets of the earth. She was extremely beautiful and she carried in her hand a handsome box.

The lady and her escort reached the house of a young man, named Epimetheus who was delighted to accept her as his wife.

It was after their marriage that the box which the bride carried was opened. Pop came out a host of imps—of disease, despair and numerous other evils. They immediately spread all over the world. Since then they have continued to afflict mankind.

However, the last to be seen inside the box was hope. If man lives despite all his sufferings caused by the other

contents of the box, it is because of this hope.

But why was mankind cursed with such a 'gift'—Pandora's Box? The brother of Epimetheus, Prometheus, was a daring youth. When Zeus, the great Greek god, refused to let man use fire, Prometheus, who was the son of a Titan and a nymph, stealthily climbed the heavens and stole fire from the chariot of the sun and gave it to men. This infuriated Zeus and at his instruction a god made Pandora out of clay. Goddess Athene breathed life into her. Other gods gave her a variety of charms and qualities. Zeus gave her the box full of evils to wreck his vengeance on mankind.

Pandora, the extremely

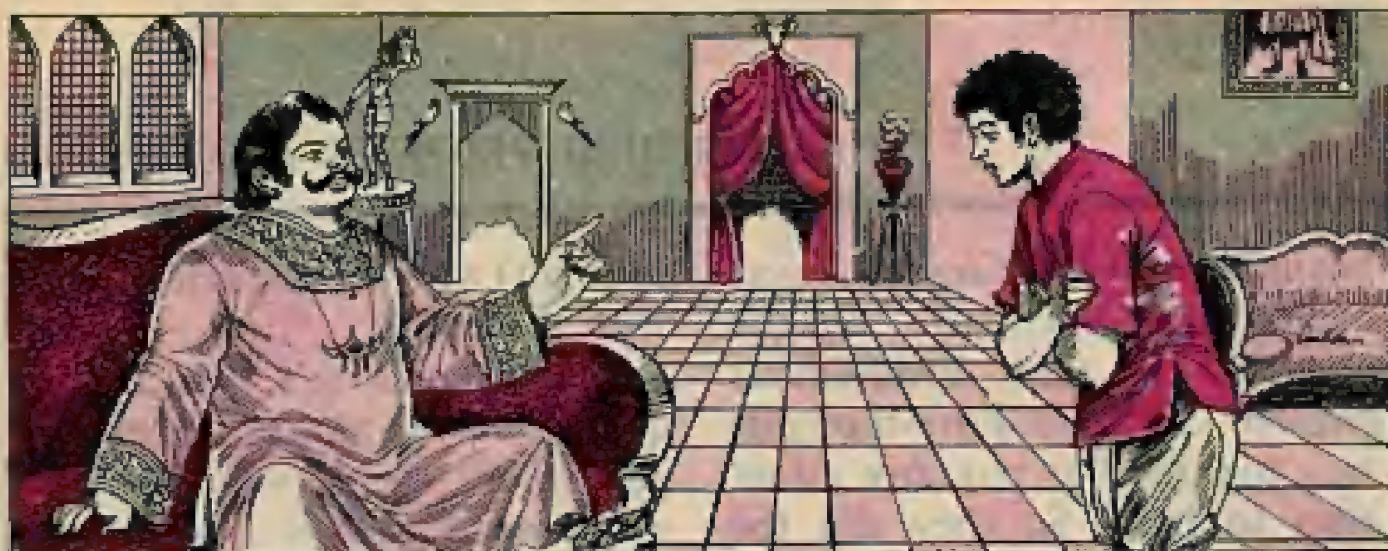
TALES BEHIND PROVERBS AND PHRASES

beautiful and cunning lady, was meant for Prometheus. But the gods knew that Prometheus (which means Fore-thought) was too wise to pay any attention to her. So they did the next best thing: they sent her to Epimetheus (meaning After-

thought) who accepted her along with the box!

Hence Pandora's Box, a frequently used phrase, means a gift which seems valuable but which soon proves a source of a series of unexpected troubles or calamities.





Running After The Marriage

Vijay Roy, the landlord, was quite desirous of earning the fame of a philanthrope. But being a miser, he felt pain at parting with even a single paisa. So, he never said "No" to anybody who came to him seeking any kind of help. Instead, he promised to give the necessary help when the seeker fulfilled a certain condition. Thus, he never refused a thing to anybody, although he never gave anything to anybody!

In the landlord's village lived an orphan named Ranganath. He was very poor. One day he met the landlord and told him all about his hardship.

"How can I help you?" asked the landlord.

"Sir, if you are pleased to give me some money, I can set up a small shop," replied Ranganath and he added, "Hardly anybody knows me. So, who else will come forward to help me?"

"I'm ready to help you. But I cannot accept as true your statement that hardly anybody knows you. If the first man you meet one day is found to be a man who does not know you, come to me, bringing the man with you. I will give you a hundred gold coins," said the landlord.

Ranganath agreed to do so. Next day, early in the morning, he entered a small lane. He hoped to see somebody there

who would not know him. In fact, the first man he saw in the lane was a beggar and Ranganath advanced at him with a great hope. But the beggar asked him, "What brings you here at such an early hour, Ranganath?"

Ranganath was disappointed. He learnt that the lame beggar had once been helped by him in crossing a bridge two years ago and had gratefully remembered Ranganath since then.

Ranganath took his chance again on the next day. He was on the village street an hour before the sunrise. He saw a man who seemed to him a

genuine stranger coming that way. Ranganath hurried to him and said, "I do not know who you are. But will you be kind enough to accompany me to the landlord's house?"

"Is this fellow not Ranganath?" asked the man as if to himself and said, "How do you say that you don't know me, I being Sadhu Das of the next village? And why on earth should I go to the landlord's house? Have I not paid my taxes two weeks ago?"

"I am sorry, Sadhu Dasji; you need not accompany me to the landlord's house," said Ranganath and soon remem-





bered that the man happened to be the father-in-law of the watchman of his village. One day Ranganath had shown him a short-cut lane leading to the watchman's house. That made him lose the chance of bagging a hundred gold coins now!

As days passed, Ranganath realised how difficult it was to find a man who did not know him. After a fortnight he left his house and arrived at a village several miles away. Tired, he sat down on the veranda of a house. Soon he heard a woman scolding his son, saying, "Your mischief will be the cause of my death and your

father's. You will be as helpless as the orphan Ranganath of the landlord's village!"

By and by Ranganath came to learn that in that particular village his name had become a proverb, a synonym of poverty and misery. Although nobody had perhaps ever seen him, almost everybody knew him by name. He sighed and left for the next village.

He had hardly entered the new village when he was seen by a woman. A daughter of Ranganath's village, she had married in the village which Ranganath now visited. She took Ranganath to her house and fed him well.

There were many in this village who did not know Ranganath. It would not have been difficult for Ranganath to come across one of them as the first man to be met by him in the morning. But why would any of them care to go with him to the landlord's court?

Ranganath forgot of the promised gold coins and continued to live in that village. He earned a meagre livelihood through hard work.

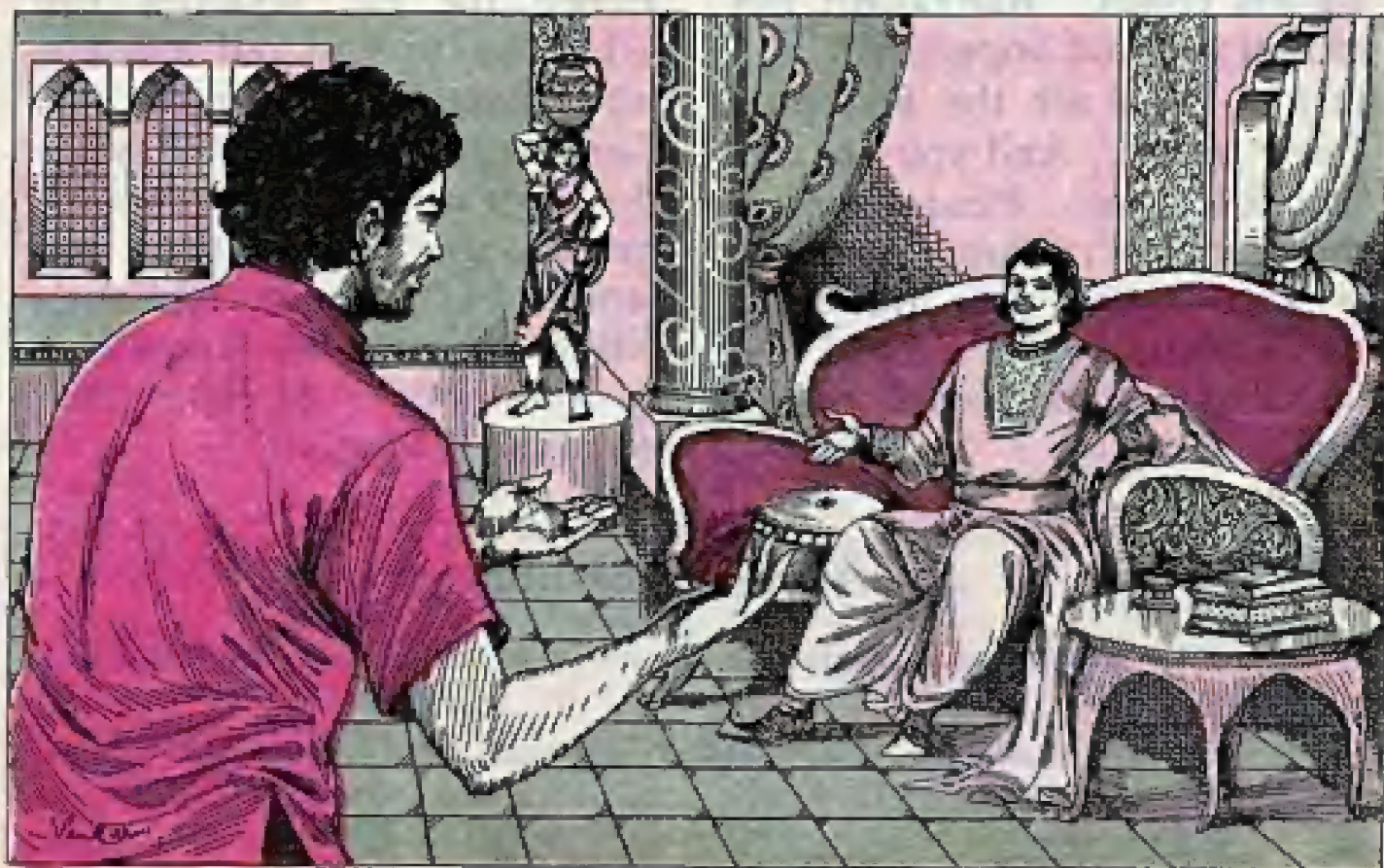
Thirty years passed. One day Ranganath felt a great urge to pay a visit to his native vill-

age. He walked continuously and reached the village in the evening. The face of the village had completely changed. There was not a single man who would easily recognise Ranganath. The old landlord, Vijay Roy, was no more.

"How easy it would have been for me to produce before Vijay Roy a dozen men who would not know me, were he alive!" thought Ranganath. However, he met Vijay Roy's son, the new landlord, and told him about the condition the late landlord had laid down for his getting the reward of a hundred gold coins.

"Sir, I do not claim a hundred gold coins for each one of the villagers who do not know me. That should amount to thousands of coins! But be pleased to give me at least a hundred gold coins," Ranganath pleaded with the new landlord.

"I do not know who you are. My father never told me a word about his commitment to you. But know that I am as great a philanthrope as my late lamented father. I will give you a hundred gold coins. But that will be on the day when the first man you see would be one who knows you!" declared the landlord.





Ranganath loitered in the village every day early in the morning with the hope of meeting a known fellow. But his efforts were in vain.

One morning it so happened that the first man Ranganath saw was the landlord travelling by his coach. Ranganath ran to him and said hopefully, "I am lucky. You are the first man I saw today. And you are one who knew me. Please give me the promised reward."

"Get away, you tramp! I don't know you!" yelled the landlord and the coach passed him.

Ranganath kept on standing there for a long time. Then he mopped the sweat off his face and mumbled to himself, "These fellows know the nature of their times. In days gone by, everybody knew and remembered the people around him. Hence the old landlord had asked me to find out a fellow who would not know me. Time has changed and today one does not care to know even his neighbour. Hence the new landlord asked me to find out a fellow who would know me. A fool was I to take their words so seriously!"

GRAMMAR IN TROUSERS

The teacher asked the students whether the word "Trousers" was singular or plural.

After a long silence a boy stood up and said, "It is singular at the top, but plural at the bottom!"

THE TWO HEADED BIRD

In the ancient time there was a strange bird which lived near a lake. The lake was encircled by snow-clad hills. Plants and creepers of that region abounded in beautiful flowers.

From distant lands birds came there to have a glimpse of the strange bird. What to speak of birds, even fairies came to see it once in a while.

The strange bird had charming wings and a magnificent tail like that of the peacock. But what is more, it had two heads sporting two colourful crowns. In other words, it could sing a duet alone! Who would not feel tempted to see it and hear its song?

Birds who paid it visits often brought with them delicious fruits from distant places. Whatever fruits they brought,



they made sure to bring at least two of them, one for each head of the strange bird. The bird, no doubt, was very proud of its uniqueness.

Once it so happened that a vessel containing nectar which a god was carrying through the sky fell down from his hand. It remained suspended from the branch of a tree, near which sat the two-headed bird. The head which was nearer to the vessel instantly started drinking the content.

"Stop for a moment and let me have a sip of the drink. Its

flavour is driving me mad!" said the other head.

But the first head did not care a jot for the second head's appeal.

"Do you hear me?" demanded the second head impatiently.

"I hear you all right," said the first head and resumed drinking the nectar.

"I say, allow me to drink it too!" shrieked the second head again. But the first head showed no sign of hearing him.

Nearby was a hole in which lived a cobra. It popped out its head to see what was happening. Upon its head it carried a tiny

pot which contained poison.

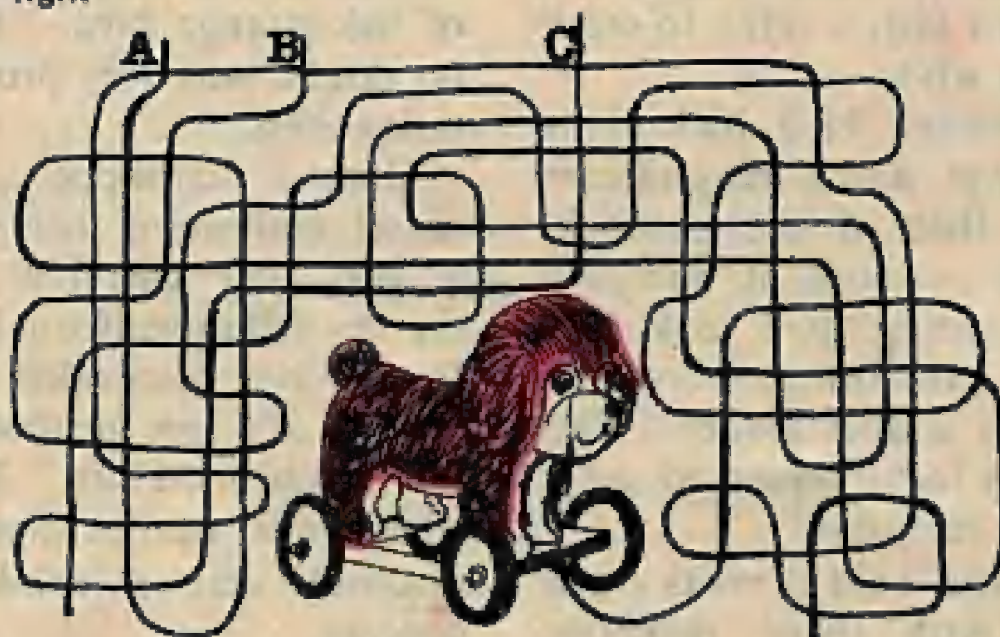
The second head knew well the nature of the content on the snake's head.

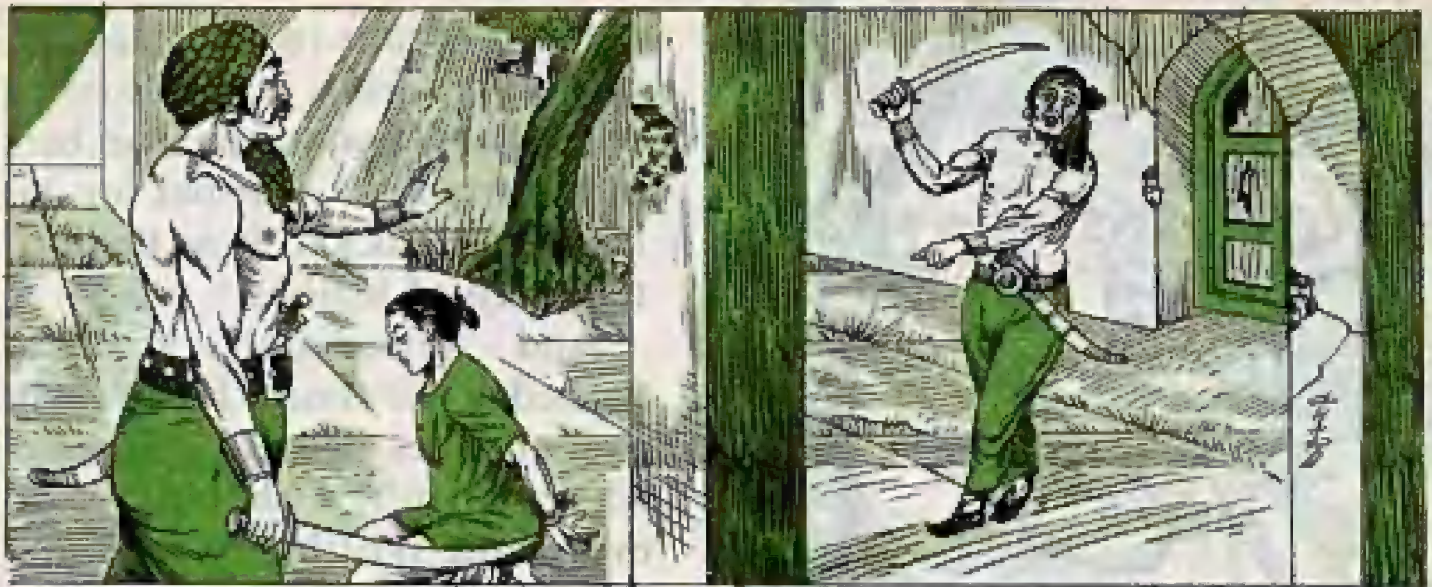
"Let me see how long you can continue enjoying the drink," said the second head and began to sip the poison from the cobra's head.

The effect was instant. The strange bird, with both its head, fell dead!

A few birds who had come to pay their respect to the two-headed bird and who watched the incident from the nearby trees, said "Thank God, we have only one head each!"

First try to guess which string is joined to the toy dog's trolley. Then trace along the line to see if you were right.





A SIGN FROM THE GODDESS

"Should I kill this audacious fellow, master?" asked a lieutenant of Raghu Sardar, the leader of a gang of notorious bandits.

"No. Have you forgotten that we are required to sacrifice a human being at the altar of our goddess tomorrow?" said Raghu. Then he ordered the prisoner to be confined to a room.

Ajit, the prisoner, was led into a room which had only one door and one window. Once the door was locked, Ajit's only link with the outside world was

the window which had iron bars.

Ajit understood that there was no hope of escape for him, as the bandits guarded the room by turns. They strolled around, casting glances at him through the window.

Ajit was in a party of pilgrims on their way to Puri. In those days there were no trains or buses. Pilgrims were obliged to walk the long distances. They went out in groups for the sake of safety. Even then they were often harassed and plundered by the organised gangs of bandits.

Ajit was an expert lathi-



player. When Raghu's gang pounced upon his party, he wielded his lathi valiantly and kept the bandits at bay for a while. That gave the other members of his party the chance to escape. Ajit was ultimately captured, but he was happy that the other pilgrims had escaped the bandits.

Ajit could not sleep at night. He remembered his near and dear ones and prepared for meeting his death.

It was morning. Ajit looked through the window at the sunrise. The early beams of the sun reached him through a bushy lemon plant. There were

plenty of fruits in the plant and one of the fruits was within his reach, just beyond the iron bars of the window. Ajit put out his hand and plucked it as he liked the smell of lemons.

And immediately an idea flashed in his mind. He thought over the idea deeply. "There is no reason why I should not do everything possible to save myself," he thought.

There was a small piece of paper in his pocket. He tore the lemon apart and rubbed a juicy slice on half of the paper. Then he let the paper lie in a corner of the room and threw the lemon into a bush.

Later in the day Raghu Sardar came to meet Ajit. The Sardar seemed to be in a jolly mood. He said, "I must admit that you played lathi wonderfully well. I should have recruited you to our gang. But you are destined to die. Otherwise you should not fall into our hands on the eve of the sacred ceremony when we are required to sacrifice a human being to our goddess!"

"You are wrong, Raghu. I am destined to change your life. The goddess sent me here so that I can open your eyes to what is truly her wish and what

is not," answered Raghu in a grave tone.

Ajit's words surprised Raghu. He never expected a prisoner who knew of his imminent death to speak with such force.

"What do you mean?" asked Raghu.

"Do not be under the vain impression that you alone were the devotee of the goddess. I too have been worshipping her since my infancy. The goddess appeared before me in my dream last night and expressed her regret over the blunders you are committing. She told me that you were doomed to suffer terribly in hell not only for your own sins but also for all the crimes committed by your followers. It is her desire that you mend your ways without any further loss of time," replied Raghu.

"How to believe that what you are saying is true?" asked Raghu in a faltering manner.

"You want some proof, do you? Well, if the goddess pleases, she can give a sign in any way," said Ajit. Then he looked here and there and picked up the piece of paper and looked at it as if he saw it for the first time. He tore the paper into two pieces and gave one piece to Raghu.



"Will you please lead me to the presence of the goddess?" he said.

Raghu led him to their temple. Ajit prostrated himself to the deity and recited some prayer.

"Raghu! Please pick up a *japa* flower from the feet of the deity. Give a petal or two of it to me. Then rub a few petals of the flower on the piece of paper I gave you. Let me also rub the petals on my piece of paper. If I am a liar, both the papers will show the usual black or bluish colour when the *japa* is rubbed on them. On the other hand, if I am telling you the truth, your paper should

show an unusual reddish tint. I have prayed to the goddess to give this sign in my support," said Ajit.

Raghu gave a part of the flower to Ajit. Then he placed the paper on the ground and rubbed his part of the flower on it while Ajit too did the same. To Raghu's great surprise, his paper turned reddish while Ajit's paper looked black.

Raghu trembled in awe and knelt down before Ajit and stammered, "O great soul! Please pardon this sinner. I am convinced that you are the chosen child of the goddess. Tell me what is your message for us!"

"The message is simple. Give up harassing people. Let me show you how to lead an innocent and happy life," said Ajit.

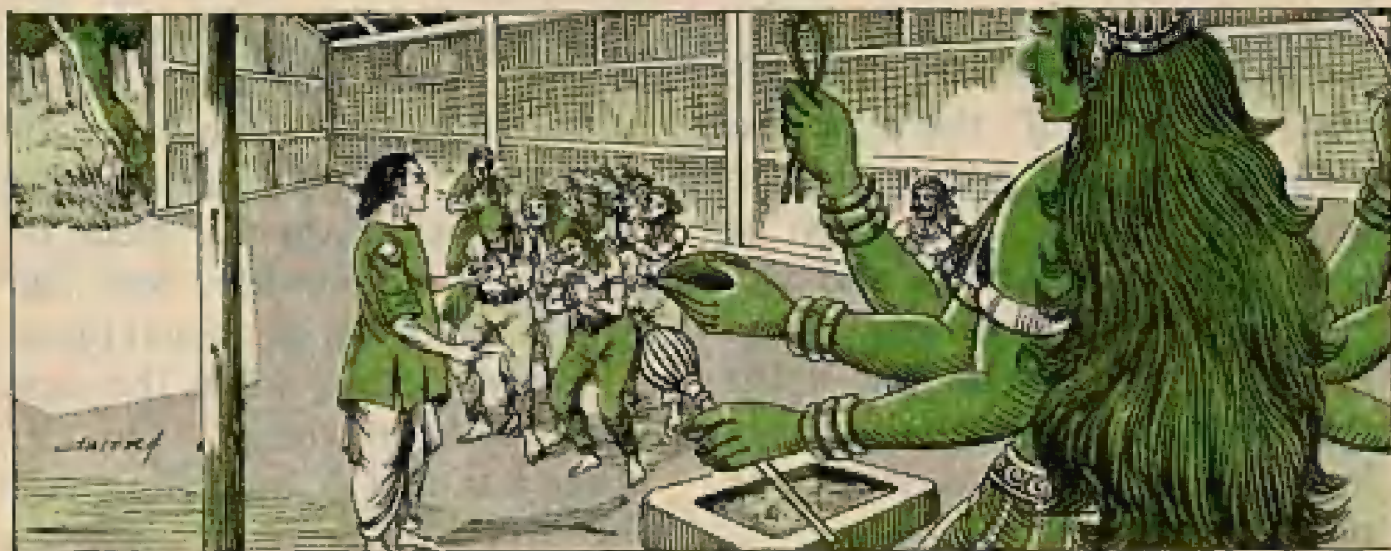
Ajit continued to live with the gang for a long time and

taught them various ways of cultivation. They changed a part of the forest into an orchard. They built a rest house for travellers. They laboured and earned their livelihood while doing good to others.

Ajit had learnt a few tricks of magic. The knowledge not only saved him, but also changed the outlaws into fine citizens.

What did the trick was Raghu's knowledge that if the *japa* (also pronounced as *jaba* or *jawa*, its botanical name being *clous eviseora*) flower is rubbed on a paper which has been treated with lemon juice, it will look red while an ordinary piece of paper will show black or blue tint. The part of paper which Ajit had given to Raghu was the part on which he had rubbed the lemon earlier.

by A. C. SORCER, Magician





A Potful of Gold Coins

This happened more than a hundred years ago. A certain king had a faithful officer named Eknath. One morning, while demolishing a pillar of his ancestral house which was in ruins at the backyard of his new house, he found a hidden pot.

Eknath knew that such hidden pots generally contained coins or precious metals like silver or gold. He was about to remove the lid of the pot. But his wife checked him, saying, "We should not be in a hurry to open it. Evil forces might eye the content. Let us carry it home first. We should open it after consulting the almanac, at an auspicious moment."

"But, whatever be the content, all buried wealth belongs

to the king," observed Eknath.

"That is nonsense. What we find on our own ground is ours," said his wife.

Eknath was in no mood to argue. He carried the heavy pot into his house.

Ramesh, a neighbour, overheard their conversation and saw them carrying the pot. Through the window he also noticed where the pot was kept. He thereafter ran to the headman of the village and asked him, "If someone finds some buried property, what does he do with it?"

"If he is honest, he brings it to the king's notice," replied the headman and then he added, "I'm sure, you have found some. I will report the matter to the



king."

Ramesh was scared. "Not I," he hurried to say, "It is Eknath who has discovered a buried pot and he intends to offer it to the king. You do not have to bother about it."

The headman thought for a while and whispered to Ramesh, "How are we benefited if the king gets the property? If you collaborate, we can have the property divided between ourselves."

Ramesh agreed to collaborate.

The crooked headman had in his pay-roll a ruffian named Veerak. He would set Veerak after anybody whom he desired

to harass. All were afraid of Veerak, but very few knew who the ruffian's patron was.

At night, after his wife fell asleep, Eknath poured the content of the pot, all gold coins, into a sack and hid the sack elsewhere. Then he filled up the pot with broken pieces of glass and pebbles.

At midnight the headman summoned Veerak and sent him to Ramesh. Ramesh led Veerak to Eknath's house and showed him the pot through the window.

Veerak entered the house stealthily and came out with the pot. In the darkness he poured half of the content into an empty pot and gave it to Ramesh. That was the condition Ramesh had made with the headman.

But once they were on the road Veerak suddenly hit Ramesh on his head. Ramesh fell down losing consciousness. Veerak dragged him to the side of a bush and escaped with both the pots. He had been instructed by the headman to do this. The headman knew that Ramesh would never be able to complain about it to the king since he was himself an accomplice in the theft.

Veerak came to the village crossroads. One road led to the headman's house while another led to his own. He hesitated for a moment. Then, instead of taking the first road, he began walking towards his own home.

Bang! Veerak was flat on the ground the very next moment. The headman who had started suspecting Veerak lately, was following him. When he saw Veerak taking the wrong route, he hit him hard.

The headman then took hold of the two pots and reached home.

Early in the morning, before his wife was awake, Eknath proceeded to meet the king with the sack. He had just told the king about the buried wealth when Ramesh appeared there, weeping.

Ramesh was not a bad charac-

ter. It was only temporarily that he had come under the headman's evil influence. On regaining consciousness, he had been determined to make a clean breast of everything to the king, even at the risk of being punished.

The king despatched his police to the headman's house. Both the pots were discovered there, although they were full of pebbles and broken pieces of glass! The headman and Veerak were arrested and punished. To Eknath, the king said, "All this property is yours!"

When Eknath was back home with the sack, his wife was crying. She said, "How unlucky we are! The pot is gone!"

"The pot is gone, but not its content!" said Eknath as he removed the cover from his sack.



REASON FOR ACTION!

A rich man had a smart dog. One day, while a farmer was on his way to his field with a shovel in his hand, the dog rushed at him and tried to set its teeth on his leg. But the farmer planted a prompt blow on the dog's mouth with his shovel. The dog lost a tooth and slunk away.

The owner of the dog complained before the headman of the village about the injury done to his dog.

"I had to do it to save myself," explained the farmer.

"But why did you plant the blow on the dog's mouth? You could have done it to his tail!" said the dog-owner.

"The fact is, the dog was about to use his mouth on me, not his tail!" answered the farmer.

One who laughed most at the farmer's answer was the owner of the dog.





VEER HANUMAN

Ravana marched into the garden where Sita sat weeping, brooding over the fate of Rama. At a little distance stood a horde of demon women, guarding her.

Ravana began speaking in a tone as if he had some good news to convey to Sita. He said, "The play is over. Your Rama is killed. Hence there need be no hesitation on your part to marry me. Do you wish to hear how Rama met his end? After his arrival in Lanka with an army of Vanaras, he fell asleep in his camp, being tired. Prahastha, my able general, entered his camp with a regiment of demons and beheaded him. Vibhisana was captured while trying to escape.

Sugriva, Hanuman and other leading personalities of Rama's camp too have been killed, along with countless Vanaras. Only Lakshmana has succeeded in fleeing, accompanied by a few Vanaras."

Then Ravana ordered a demon to ask Vidyujjihwa to bring Rama's head there.

Vidyujjihwa, who was waiting for this summons, arrived there instantly, sporting a false head and a bow which resembled Rama's head and bow.

"Let Sita have a look at her husband's head and realise the situation," Ravana said.

As Vidyujjihwa laid the head and the bow he had created by his magic before Sita, Ravana



said again, "You can see not only the head of Rama but also his bow. Do you now understand that you had no other go than to marry me?"

Sita looked at the head in horror and burst into a wailing. She made Kaikeyi responsible for the misfortune that had befallen Rama. "How will mother Kaushalya stand it when Lakshmana would pass on the news of Rama's death to her?" muttered Sita before she swooned away. The demon women sprinkled water on her face. On regaining her consciousness after a while, she told Ravana, "Be kind and arrange to lead me to my hus-

band's pyre. I wish to enter the pyre and put an end to my life. Gods will be pleased with you if you help me in accomplishing this goal."

Before Ravana had spoken again, a messenger came rushing to him and informed him that Prahastha, the general, and the ministers, were waiting to consult him urgently.

Ravana left the garden immediately. Vidyujjihwa followed him. As soon as they crossed the gate the false head and the bow disappeared.

Vibhisana's wife, Sarama, who loved and adored Sita, hurried to her and consoled her, saying, "I assure you, all that Ravana said was nothing but lie. Do you know why he left this place abruptly? It is because Lanka is in grave danger from an invasion by Rama. I have just seen the tension among our soldiers. They are preparing their horses and elephants for leading them into the battlefield. I have no doubt that Rama would defeat Ravana before long and rescue you. Have patience, my dear sister!"

Sarama's words gave some peace to Sita. She stopped weeping.

Sarama said again, "Should I

fly to Rama's camp and give news about you? I must tell you that I can fly at will and even command a greater speed than Garuda, the bird of Vishnu.

"Your kindness overwhelms me. But, at the moment, what is most important for me to know is the next move of Ravana. He keeps on frightening me. I will feel some relief when his attention is diverted," said Sita.

Sarama wiped the tears off Sita's eyes and went away. She returned after some time and reported, "I heard Ravana's mother and an aged minister advising him to surrender you to Rama. But Ravana remains adamant in his stand which is not to return you. Unfortunately, his arrogance gets support from his foolish ministers."

As they were talking, the sound of drums and bugles and conch-shells, accompanied by war-cries of the Vanaras could be heard from distance. They realised that Rama was about to begin his assault on the fort of Ravana.

Ravana heard the sound and the cries while conferring with his ministers. His wrath fell on his ministers. He roared, "Time and again some of you



have advised me to surrender Sita to Rama. I hope, you are not panic-struck now that the war-cry of the enemy is heard."

One of his ministers, Malyavanta, said, "My lord, if Rama is likely to prove stronger than us, why should we hesitate to compromise with him? Why should we not surrender Sita Devi, who is the sole cause of enmity between us, to him? Such a move has its sanction in convention!"

Malyavanta further reminded Ravana that the boon that protected him from various kinds of beings and creatures did not extend to Vanaras and wolves.

Ravana did not relish Malya-



vanta's warning. He cast a stern look at the minister and said, "In the garb of a well-wisher you are doing me the harm of an enemy by disheartening me. What is Rama but a mortal roaming about in the forest? The Vanaras are his only strength. On the other hand, I happen to be the king of the demons, the terror of the gods. How do you advise me to bow to a human being? I should think that you are either jealous of me or you have been won over by the enemy. There could be no other explanation for your conduct. I tell you for the last time that there is no question of my restoring Sita

to Rama. If Rama is truly stronger than me, I would rather lose my head to him than bow to him!"

The aged Malyavanta understood that Ravana was in no mood to see sense. He blessed Ravana, wished him success in the battle, and left the court.

Ravana thereafter discussed with his other ministers the strategy of defence. The responsibility was shared by Meghnad, Shuka, Sarana and Virupaksha. The heroes then sang the glory of Ravana and dispersed.

On the other side, several Vanaras had grown pessimistic about their success in the battle, looking at the huge fort of Ravana. They wondered if it would ever be possible for them to scale the high walls or penetrate the strongly guarded gates.

But Vibhisana revived courage in them, saying that his four companions, assuming the form of birds, had had a survey of the preparations inside the fort and that the knowledge would help them in invading the fort.

Vibhisana and his four companions told Rama in detail about the demon-heroes whom the Vanaras must face. After listening to them carefully,

Rama decided which Vanara should confront which demon.

Rama advised those Vanaras who were capable of changing themselves into human beings to continue in their Vanara form during the battle so that confusion could be avoided. Only Hanuman, Sugriva, Neela, Angada and Vibhisana could assume human forms. Since they were to remain in the forefront of the army, there was no chance of mistaking their true identity.

Rama and Lakshmana, accompanied by Vibhisana and other heroes, went up to the top of the Subela hill. Ravana's fort situated on Mount Trikut could be seen most clearly from the Subela. As Rama looked at the fort and the demons who loitered around it, the Vanaras gave out lusty roars.

They spent the night on the hill. At dawn, Ravana's fort, surrounded by gardens and orchards, looked extremely beautiful. Rama and others kept looking at it when Ravana was seen viewing them from the terrace of his castle.

Sugriva, unable to restrain himself, shouted, "You wicked Ravana, I, the follower of Ramachandra, announce your



doom. There is no escape for you."

"Your name, I understand is Sugriva—which means one with a fine throat. Well, I will soon cut that fine throat," shrieked Ravana.

Suddenly Ravana and Sugriva pounced on each other. For a long time they remained locked in wrestle. Growing tired, Ravana started resorting to tricks. At that Sugriva left him and shot up into the sky and then descended near Rama.

Rama took Sugriva to task, saying, "Why did you begin the fight all on a sudden, without my permission? You are the king. If any danger be-



falls you, our soldiers would lose nerve. We must proceed calmly. Only then we can put an end to Ravana and crown Vibhisana as the king of Lanka.”

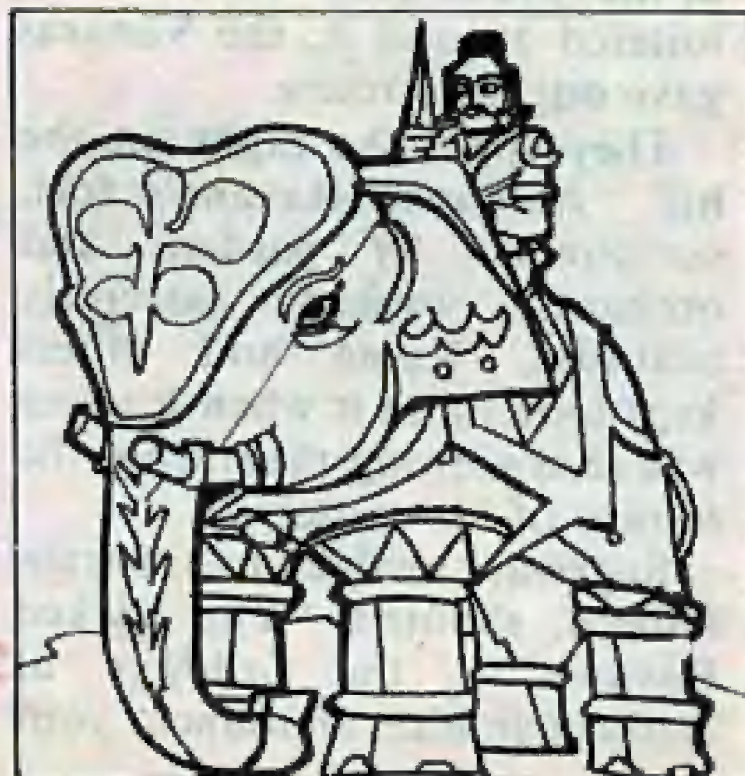
“My lord! I could not check my anger at the sight of the demon, the wicked kidnapper of

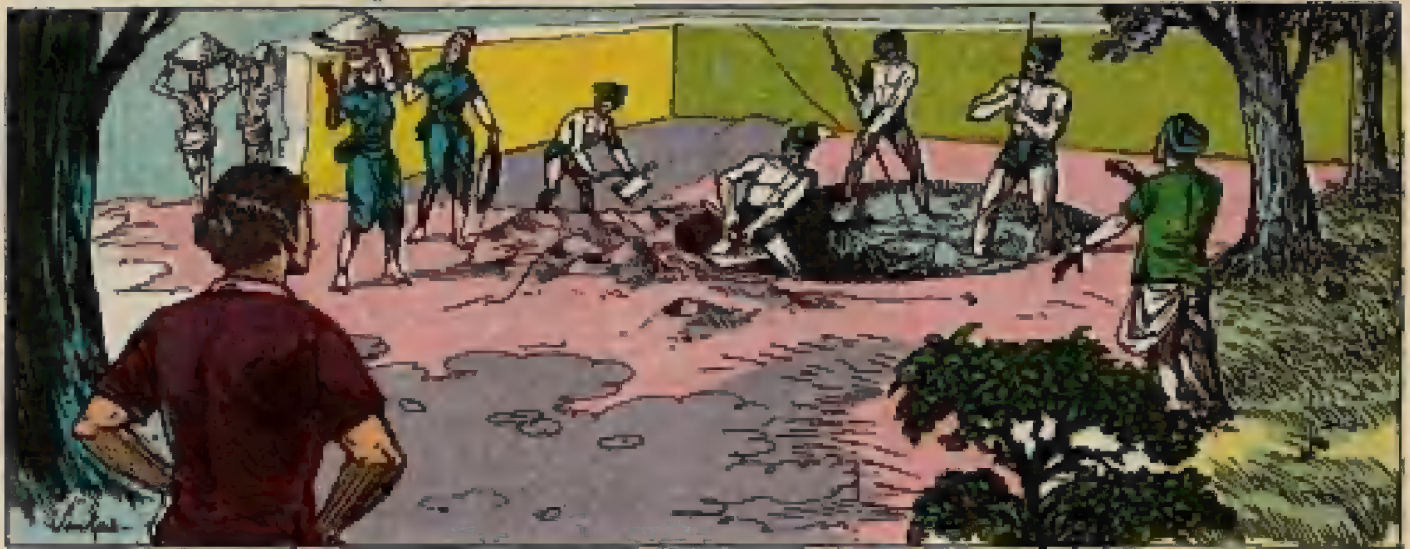
Sita Devi,” said Sugriva.

Then they descended from the hill. The army was asked to follow them. They marched towards Ravana’s fort and camped in front of its northern gate which was guarded by Ravana himself.

Could.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





THE MISER'S WELL

Sujan Singh was as rich as he was miser. For a long time he wanted to dig a well in his compound. But he did not wish to pay the labourers the wage they ordinarily received for their work. He offered them less. They refused to work. Thus the days passed.

Once there was a drought in the country. The crop failed. At such times people do not come forward to build houses or to begin any other work for which labourers were required. So the poor people who earned their ration through daily labour suffered much.

Sujan Singh thought that it was the right time to hire the labourers for digging the well.

He asked Raj, the leader of a gang of labourers, to take up the work at a reduced wage.

Raj agreed to the wage, but he said, "We were about to go to the town with a week's contract for working in a project."

"Why should you go so far? My work will take almost a week!" said Sujan Singh.

Raj refused the offer from the town and, with his gang, began digging Sujan Singh's well. But after they had worked for two days, Sujan Singh saw that the ground there was formed of layers of rocky soil. He asked Raj to stop the work and he dismissed the gang giving them two days' wage.

Raj was sad. He had refused



a week's contract for the sake of Sujan Singh. Now, what would his workers say?

It was a moonlit night. He summoned his workers and asked them to fetch a jarful of

water each. At his instruction the jars were emptied into the half-dug well.

Next morning Sujan Singh looked into the well and was amazed to see water at its bottom. He concluded that the water was oozing out of the earth. He ran to Raj and said, "I have changed my mind. Please continue the work!"

"But we have luckily got the offer from the town again! Unless you give us wage for five days, all in advance, and also at a little higher rate, my workers would not agree to work for you!"

Sujan Singh feared that if the work of the well was left unfinished it would require more work and more expenses afterwards. So he was obliged to do as asked by Raj. At the end of the week not a drop of water was to be seen in the well!



"Is that the pet shop? . . . about that parrot you sold me six months ago . . ."

Between The Ghost and Poet

There was a king who excelled all his subjects in foolishness. His minister was a clever man. The master's foolishness proved to be a great boon to the minister. He exploited the king and amassed wealth. But he was not satisfied with that much. Whenever the king would decide to give a reward to anybody, he would undertake to hand it over to the recipient. In the process he would pocket half of it, if not more!

One day a poet from a far-away land paid a visit to the court. He recited a few couplets in praise of the king. The king felt thrilled. Nobody had ever sung his virtues in such sweet words! He announced a reward of a hundred gold mohurs to the poet.

The minister was not at all happy with this. The poet being a man from another land, the minister would get no chance to extract his share from the reward. So he decided to deprive the poet of the reward altogether.

"My lord! I am surprised at this stranger's audacity. The

verses he recited had been composed by my father who died before he could recite them to you. This fellow must have been one of the many scholars who used to learn the art of composition from my father. Obviously the fellow had stolen away these verses from my father's stock of manuscripts!" said the minister.

The minister's father, who died a year ago, was no doubt a poet. The king had no reason to disbelieve the minister's claim. He shouted at the stranger, "No reward for you. Get out!"

The poet left the court feeling bewildered.

But he was not the type of man to forgo a hundred gold mohurs so easily. Besides, the minister's behaviour intrigued him. He stayed on in the town and gathered as much information as possible about the minister and his father. He learnt that only two days were left for the first death anniversary of the minister's father.

Next day he appeared in the king's court.

"Why are you here again? I



am not interested in your verses," blurted out the king.

"My lord! I am not here to recite verses, but to pay the penalty for what I have already recited," answered the poet.

"What do you mean?" asked the king.

"My lord! It was only yesterday that I was caught while trying to pass as my own composition what was in fact the minister's father's. But I have done the same sort of dishonesty elsewhere. Last night the minister's father's ghost asked me in my dream to pay a penalty of a hundred gold mohurs for my plagiarism. I

asked him how to despatch the amount to him. He informed me that his death anniversary would fall in a day or two. While performing the rituals concerning the anniversary, the minister should hold the coins in his hands. The coins would there by reach the departed soul!" said the poet.

The minister who had falsely accused the poet of having stolen his father's verses, now thought that the man was really one of his father's disciples who had stolen his father's verses. He was happy that his lie proved to be true!

In his enthusiasm, the minister said, "You are right. My father appeared to me in my dream and instructed me to receive the mohurs from you."

The mohurs changed hands. The king, amazed, observed, "This is a very truthful man!"

"Yes, my lord, now I remember my father saying that among all his disciples this one never uttered a lie," said the minister, immensely happy with the coins.

The poet humbly saluted the king and the minister and left the court.

But he reappeared there three days later, looking quite agitated.

"What is the matter with

you?" asked the king.

"My lord! The minister's father's ghost complained to me last night that the mohurs never reached him. He said that the minister did not perform the rituals with a pure mind. That is why great misfortune will befall him as well as his master, who happens to be your highness!" said the poet.

"Good heavens! What is to be done now?" asked the king with great anxiety.

"I asked the same question to the ghost, my lord. It said that the minister must be sacrificed in a *yajna*. Only then the ghost would be satisfied," replied the poet.

"It must be done as the ghost wished," said the king and looking at the minister, he said, "You told yourself that this man never uttered a lie. Get ready, my dear minister, to be sacrificed for the sake of your father!"

The minister had hardly any chance to speak. The king got up hurriedly and ordered his priests and officers to arrange for the *yajna*. The chief priest consulted his palm-leaf manuscript which no other person could ever read and said that the *yajna* must go on for three



days. The minister must be kept standing, bound to a pole all the time. On the third day he was to be hurled into the fire.

The holy fire was lit and the minister was attached to a pole by its side. Throughout the day the priests kept on chanting incantations. At night, when they were asleep, the poet was seen strolling around the spot.

"O great poet! Please have pity on me," muttered the minister.

"Far from being great, I am no poet at all!" replied the poet sarcastically, and added, "I have only stolen your father's compositions, you know!"

"Forgive me my mischief, O poet of poets! I knew that I will have the great good fortune of seeing you strolling here at night. That is why I kept a piece of diamond tucked to my waist under the cloth. This is a highly precious stone which the king had given to my father. Be pleased to take it away. Another piece of the same worth, along with the hundred mohurs, will be yours when I am free!" whispered the minister to the poet who had come closer.

The poet duly took away the diamond and left the place patting the minister on his back.

The next day the poet reported to the king, "My lord! The minister's father's ghost is extremely pleased to note that you paid due heed to his instruction. He says that there is no need to sacrifice his son. You

can continue to have the benefit of the minister's wise counsel. The ghost gave me this diamond which he said he had received from you."

Great was the king's joy and surprise. He said, "The man who received a diamond from a ghost certainly deserves two from me."

The king gave the poet two sizable diamonds before going to free the minister from the pole.

"I am glad, my dear minister, that your life could be spared. It was possible because of this gentleman who never speaks a lie!" said the king.

"Thank you, my lord!" said the minister.

The jolly poet left the court after the minister gave him yet another piece of diamond along with the hundred gold mohurs.





THE LAW IN THE FOREST

In a lonely part of the forest a dove perched on a tall tree and cooed from time to time.

A fox slowly walked up to the foot of the tree and settled down on a slab of stone. Looking up, he nodded his head appreciatively as the dove cooed.

"Please do not stop. Go on cooing," he said once when the dove stopped for a minute, looking at the beautiful river at some distance. That brought the dove's attention to the fox.

The fox displayed a generous smile and said, "I have been listening to your singing for a long time. In fact, I leave all my work and rush here to enjoy your voice whenever you are pleased to sing. But won't you, for the sake of an admirer,

come down and have a stroll with me?"

"How can I? You may be an exception. But foxes are generally sly and treacherous," replied the dove.

"But I love your singing!" said the fox.

"Maybe. But can that check you from loving my flesh?" asked the dove.

"O dear dear, how can you think of such a thing? It seems you are not aware of the latest law which is in force in the forest. According to that law no animal or bird can harm another animal or bird," said the fox.

"I see! That explains how you are here heedless of the hounds who are pacing this



way," remarked the dove.

The fox gave a start and with panic in his voice, asked, "Tell me quickly, from which direction are they coming? Which way should be safe for me?"

"But why do you bother, Mr. Fox, if the law you have

just mentioned of is in force?" asked the amused dove.

"Do the hounds ever care to learn about the latest laws?" said the fox as he started running without waiting for the dove's counsel about the safe way.

The dove resumed cooing.

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